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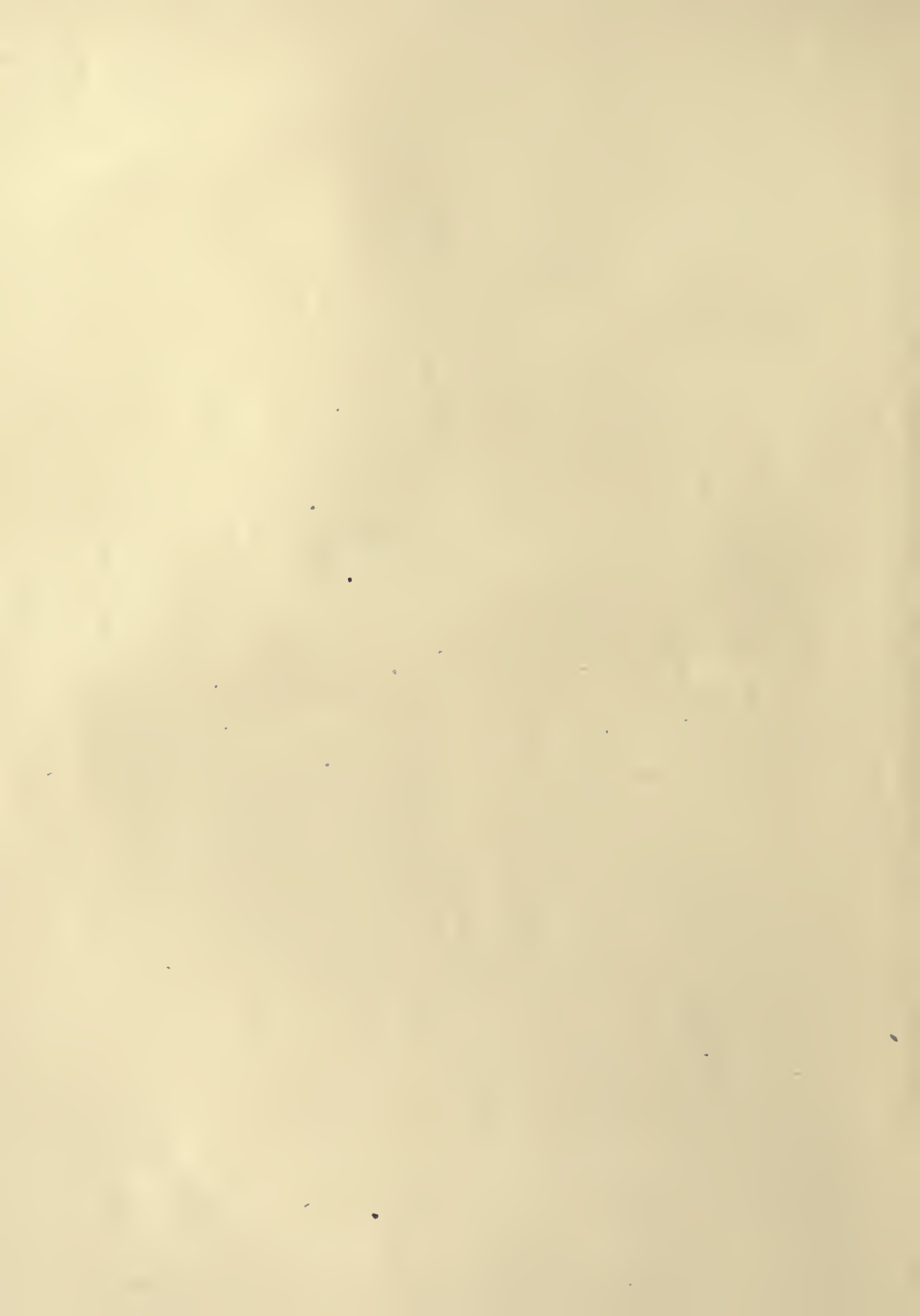
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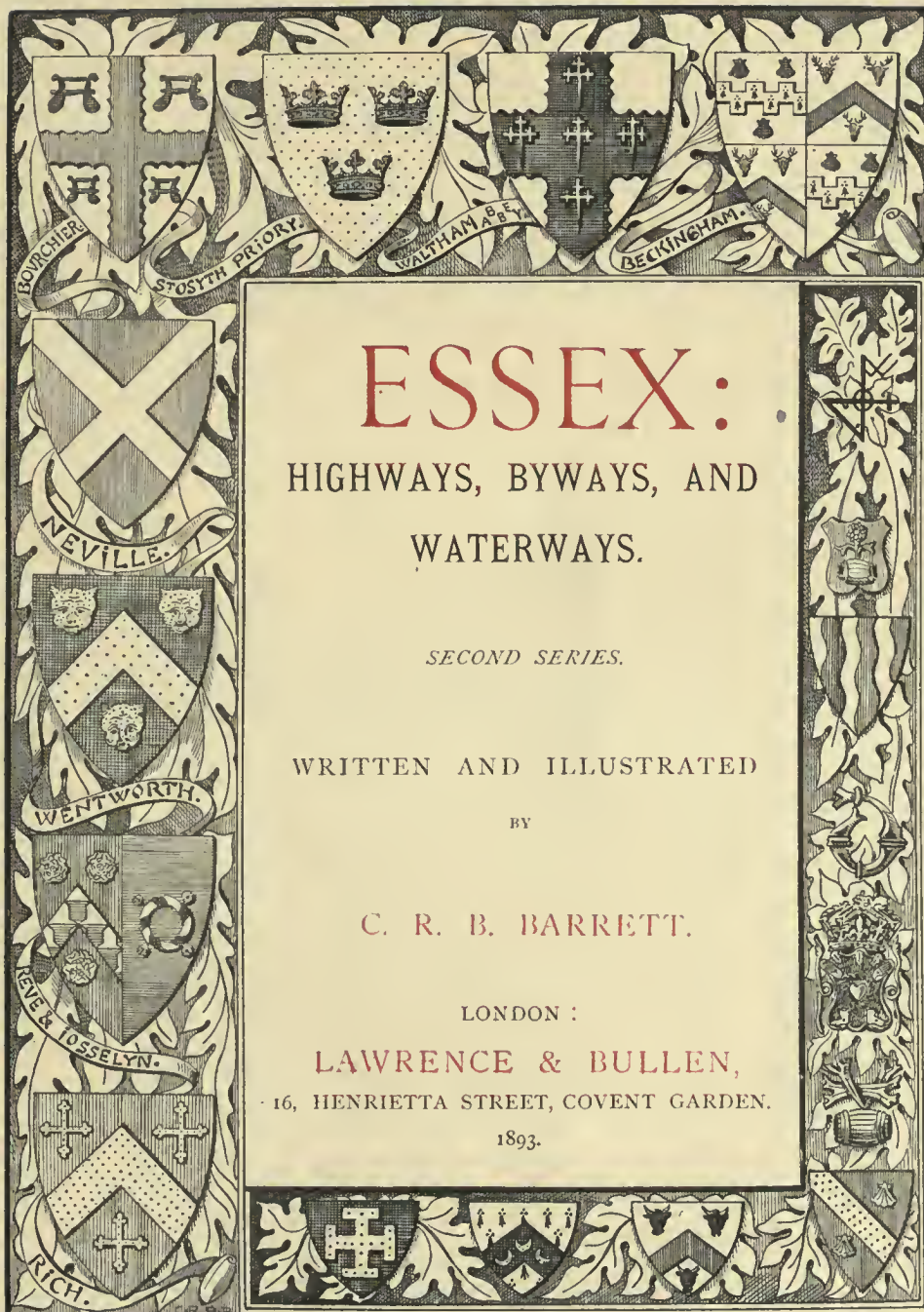
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ESSEX.





ESSEX:

HIGHWAYS, BYWAYS, AND
WATERWAYS.

SECOND SERIES.

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED

BY

C. R. B. BARRETT.

LONDON :

LAWRENCE & BULLEN,

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1893.

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P R E F A C E.

While my previous book on *Essex: Highways, Byways, and Waterways* was in course of publication, materials for a companion volume were already accumulating; and the kind reception given to the First Series quickly induced me to resume my wanderings with pen and pencil.

In the First Series I dealt mainly with boroughs and small towns. Now I go among the villages and visit the manor-houses. Time, which "hath an art to make dust of all things," has dealt gently with some of these fine old halls. Faulkbourne Hall, for instance, has been preserved in all its Tudor beauty; and nearly perfect is peaceful many-gabled Ingatestone. Others—such as D'Arcy Hall and Rayne—though partially dismantled, still offer substantial evidence of their ancient importance; but not a few—Rochford, Nether Hall, Beckingham, Dorewards, Rickling—are mere shadows of their former selves. Some national monuments in the county, notably Leighs Priory, are in a state that beggars description. From the manor houses came many a famous Essex family, the Capells, the D'Arcys, the Petres, the Riches (to name but a few).

I start from the village of Newport and, circling the county from west to east, finish my peregrinations at Harlow. A special chapter has been devoted to the famous priory of St. Osyth. Here, as in the case of Waltham Abbey, I was embarrassed by the copiousness of the materials that have been collected. On the other hand in treating such places as Newport, Rickling, Panfield, &c., the difficulty was to obtain any trustworthy information.

One object that I have kept constantly in view is to give accurate sketches, from church, hall, or wayside inn, of antiquarian details (whether in woodwork, stone, or metal)—details individually unimportant but collectively valuable.

For river-sketches I have gone to the Roding, the Stort, and the Colne. I have deliberately omitted Epping Forest; for the subject is hackneyed, and of late years the Forest has lost much of its picturesqueness.

I am much indebted for information to Mrs. Birch Wolfe, Wood Hall; A. Motion, Esq., Faulkbourne Hall; and E. A. Fitch, Esq., ex-Mayor of Maldon. Nor must I omit to thank the courteous General Manager of the Great Eastern Railway, William Birt, Esq.

TOWYN, WANDSWORTH.

6th December, 1892.

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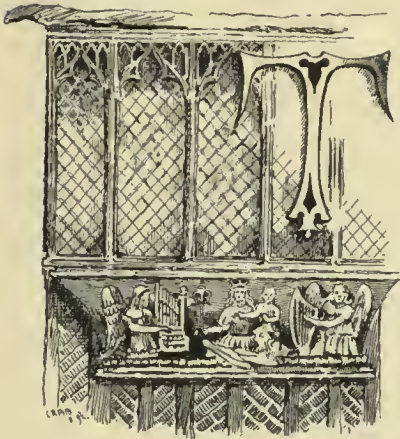
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CHAPTER I.

NEWPORT WICKEN-BONHUNT AND ARKESDEN.




THE village of Newport, for market town it can no longer claim to be, stands on the Newmarket Road, three miles south of Saffron Walden, near the malodorous ditch called the River Granta. The village street is long and straggling, being mainly composed of timber-built houses, of which not a few are of great antiquity, and one or two of extreme interest. But with all its external appearance of age Newport is almost destitute of historical associations; it can claim no celebrity as a native, nor can it boast of having been the scene of any stirring event. Of its castle, beyond a mention in an ancient document, nothing is known, though its site has been traditionally handed down to the present day. Its ancient cross, ruinous years ago, has vanished. When one considers by whom in past ages the town and manor of Newport have been held, it is somewhat astonishing that there should be this

lack of historical and antiquarian information. In Saxon times or, to be more accurate, during the reign of Edward Confessor, the place formed a portion of the possessions of Earl Harold, and at the Conquest became a royal property. That a market existed here prior to the reign of Stephen is conclusively shown from the fact that the Empress Maud in her grant of the place to Geoffrey de Magnaville, when it was known as a "pretty town," gave him licence to remove the market to Walden (where the fragments of his castle keep yet stand), and also to turn the road to the river. Later we find King John, in 1203, granting a fair here to one Gerard de Furnival, who four years afterwards surrendered to the King both the town and the castle, when a fresh grant of the place appears to have been made to Baldwin de Haverkert. This grant does not seem to have subsisted for long, as we find both Richard Earl of Cornwall, called the "King of the Romans," who died in 1271, and his son Edmund possessors in turn of Newport. The next owner was Piers de Gaveston, the luckless and much misrepresented friend of Edward II., on whom Newport was bestowed immediately after the accession of his royal foster-brother. When, however, towards the close of 1311, Gaveston was perforce deprived of his estates and banished, Newport was granted to one John Revell; and it was not among those possessions which were publicly restored to Gaveston by the King at York in 1312. But the tenure of Revell was brief, for we find the brother-in-law of Gaveston in possession very shortly afterwards. This brother-in-law, by the way, was the recipient of one of the most opprobrious of the many nicknames which the sharp-tongued Gascon was foolish enough to confer upon the members of the English

nobility. In the next reign, Henry de Ferrers held Newport by the service of a knight's fee till his death, when it passed to Edmund Langley Duke of York, one of the younger sons of Edward III. Later, the manor would seem to have been part and parcel of the Duchy of Cornwall, though a gap occurs in its history till the reign of Edward VI., when it was as such granted to William Fermor, in 1550. Three years afterwards, we find it in the hands of Sir Ralph Warren, and in this family it remained for forty-four years, when the last owner died childless, and the estates passed to a sister's son, one Oliver Cromwell, *alias* Williams of Hinchingbroke, Hunts. Subsequently Newport was purchased by the Earl Suffolk, and when these estates were divided, fell to the share of the Earls of Bristol.

The present village begins near the railway station, from which a short road leads into the village street. Just round this corner in old times there used to be a large pond, from which fact the entire place was at one time known as Newport Pond. A few yards along this road, near the house bearing

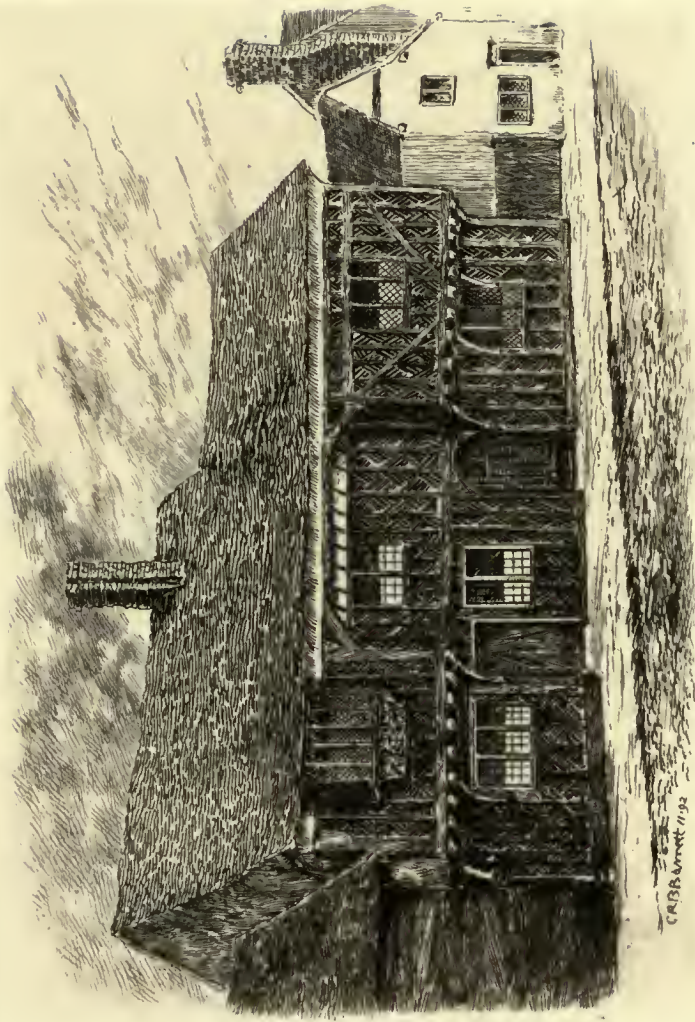


pargework dated 1694, was the site of the ancient cross which is mentioned in Holman's MSS.¹ as ruinous in his time (1713). He speaks of it as "seemingly very ancient"; and we find that it was named in the charter of de Magnaville. Here and there along the village street are to be seen old houses, but of the buildings at this end one stands out pre-eminent in interest. It is known by the name of Monks' Barn, and is recognised authorities

¹ William Holman's MS. collections, now preserved in the Colchester Museum, were largely used by Morant, the Essex historian.

are to be believed was once attached to the College of St. Martins le Grand ; by the ecclesiastics of which establishment it was used as a sanatorium. It is stated that until recent times, *i.e.*, till within the last twenty years, a bell used to be rung here at the abnormally early hour of 4 a.m. during the winter. The origin of this quaint custom seems now to be quite unknown, and as the people on the western side of Essex are less tenacious of tradition than elsewhere in the county, it is not easy to gather information locally. Monks' Barn, of which one portion forms the initial letter of this chapter, has evidently been subject to restoration, but the restoration has been carried out in a most judicious, or rather in a most inoffensive, manner. Irregularly built of upright timbers filled in with bricks, it consists of two projecting ends and a central bay ; but neither end is gabled in front as might have been expected. Of the two doorways one is certainly modern, but the other is original. The beams, beam ends and brackets are massive, and the semi-brackets which partly cover the coved eaves of the central bay are decidedly picturesque. But the chief point of interest is the carving beneath a beautiful little projecting window. This carving, which is sculpted from a solid block of oak, represents the Virgin and Child enthroned, flanked upon either side by angels, the one on her left playing upon a harp, that on her right discoursing upon a pair of organs. The interior of the house has unfortunately been deprived of any antiquities which it might ever have possessed.

Upon the other side of the road, from which it is a little removed, stands the church, and near the church is the old school building, now used as a reading-room. The church,



Henrichs' Brewery, New York.

1855

dedicated to the Blessed Mary the Virgin, has been restored to a very considerable extent, but has yet managed to retain a few features within which are worthy of notice. Of these the font cover is good, and possibly dates back to the 13th century, though I incline to put it later. The lectern, to which a modern Bible is chained, is certainly as old as the 14th century, while the oak chancel screen belongs to the 15th. Fair old carved oak has been worked into the stalls, and piscinæ will be found



both in the chancel and in each aisle. I heard, when too late to endeavour to obtain a sight of it, that there was a remarkable church chest in the vestry. It was described to me as "having five locks curiously made of steel ; painted pictures within the lid of the Virgin, SS. Peter, Paul, and John ; the lid on the outside being decorated with lead pierced and gilt." If this description be at all accurate the chest is certainly unlike any other in the county. Of the few brasses

in the church, that of "Thomas Brond and Mgery his wyf" is the most remarkable. The date of this brass is 1515, and for a wonder the inscription has been permitted to remain.¹

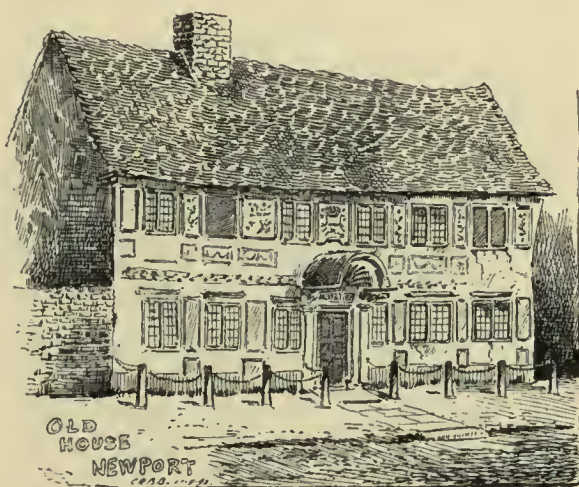
As one goes along the village street towards the slight bend where the road passes beneath the railway arch, and where the village might be expected to end, more ancient houses appear, and the view of the wide and banked street is certainly picturesque. Close to the bridge, and in fact almost beneath it, stands another old dwelling heavily bracketed and with a rude wicker-work pattern scratched upon its plastered front. Not far from this the brook



known as Wicken Water flows into the Granta. According to tradition the site of Newport Castle was upon the further bank of this brook on the left hand side of the road. It would be, however, difficult now to detect any remains even of earth works.

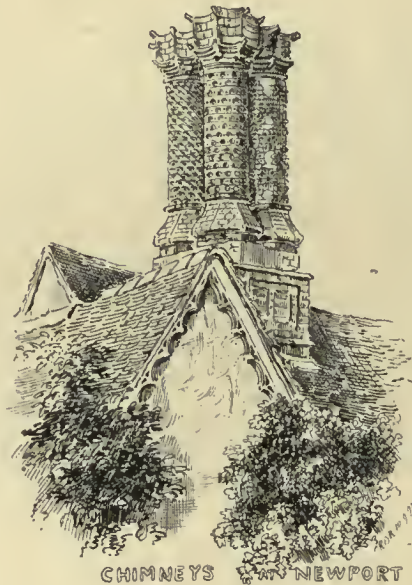
¹ While I am on the subject of tombstones it may be worth while to mention that an endeavour ought to be made to restore the lost brasses of Saffron Walden to their matrices and to reinstate the whole in their proper place. The brasses, I understand, have somehow or other found their way to Audley End; the matrices, I hear, at present floor and partly cover the walls of the kitchen of Reed Cottage, Saffron Walden, even the sink being a mutilated tombstone.

The good people of Newport do not appear to set any store by the remarkable house known as Monks' Barn, but prefer to boast of a dwelling marked upon the map as "Crown House," and locally stated to have been the residence of Mistress Nell Gwyn. Those who desire to be particularly accurate invariably add that the lady lived there for several years and had children there. Now as the date on the building is 1692, and the pargework crown above the



door from which the house took its name is of the same date, it is reasonable to suppose that the house was either built in 1692 upon a new site or that it was a house rebuilt upon an old site. This dwelling is known to have been called the market-house, possibly because the market was held near, certainly not because it was ever built for such a specific purpose; and we are also confronted with the fact that "pretty Nellie" died in 1687. Her short and merry career of thirty-seven years is fairly well known, and the

impossibility of her having passed "years" anywhere between 1665 when she first became notorious and 1687 when she died is assured. The fact probably is that at some house near, on the journey to or from Newmarket, Mistress Nell may have occasionally stopped, just as Villiers Duke of Buckingham and Wilmot Earl of Rochester are said to have tarried at the quaint old Coach and Horses Inn a few yards higher up the road. So much for a legend.



The Crown House is, however, well worthy of attention, as the pargework, though unfortunately very much damaged, is of a very peculiar type ; nay, the floral decorations seem in part to have been modelled on to the surface of the wall by hand. The door is of later date and opens into a fairly large hall which is floored with black and white marble.

Near the Crown House will be seen an old gabled building with carved bargeboards and surmounted by a group of four very beautiful chimneys. These chimneys, which are well worth study, have been copied elsewhere in Newport; these which I sketched are, however, understood to be the originals.

A few paces beyond is the quaint old Coach and Horses Inn, which even in its present condition looks as if a man in knee-breeches and a cocked hat ought to be lounging against the rugged trunk of the signboard-bearing tree which stands just before the door. There is something about these curious old country inns which cannot fail to charm when the buildings have been left in a fairly original condition. As a county, Essex is full of them, or ought to have been. Alas! the mahogany and cheap stained glass of the modern London public-house are beginning to replace the homelier but far more enjoyable arrangements of former days. Still in the course of my wanderings I have had the good fortune to fall in with not a few fine old specimens, and sketches of some I shall hope to produce.

One building, a relic of ancient Newport, yet remains to be mentioned—the hospital for lepers. It was dedicated to St. Mary and St. Leonard, and was founded in the reign of King John, it is stated, by Richard, the son of Serlo, a native of Newport. The hospital would appear to have been under the rule of a master and two chaplains, who were in their turn controlled by St. Martin's. Hence, possibly, arose the connection of that body with Monks' Barn. The statutes of the hospital do not appear to be extant; at least I have failed to discover them. Had I succeeded, they would perhaps

have shed some light upon the connection of the hospital with the Newport Fair, which was anciently held on St. Leonard's Day for the benefit of the hospital.

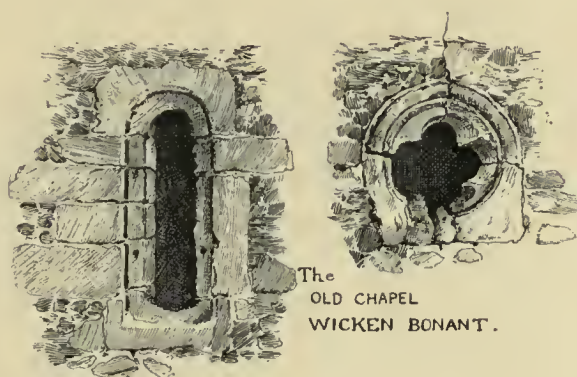
A few relics of the hospital buildings are now incorporated in the buildings known as Hospital Farm, but the main site of St. Leonard's has been traversed by the railway. The foundation, which was never wealthy, could not have been large ;



indeed at the time of its suppression its revenues amounted to but xiiijl. xs. viijd. Newport has an endowed Grammar School, which was founded in 1588 by Joyse Frankland and her son. The endowment consists *inter alia* of a portion of the great tithes of Banstead, Surrey. The tale of the mal-administration of this charity as told by Holman is quite pathetic—but times are now changed.

From Newport to the pretty village of Wicken-Bonant, or

Bonhunt, is a pleasant walk of about a mile and a half. Very soon after leaving Newport one comes in sight of a new house known as Bonhunt Farm, in front of which, and separated only by the road to the farmyard, stands a dilapidated little chapel. This chapel, which has a small nave and tiny chancel, is perhaps as old a piece of Norman work as is to be found in the county. It has two narrow Norman slits in the chancel and the same number in the nave, one of the latter being blocked up. Originally it had two doors, but one of these is now ruined beyond recognition.



The
OLD CHAPEL
WICKEN BONANT.

In the west gable is a small and much damaged though very interesting little quatrefoil window. The Norman slits bear yet the traces of the bars by which the openings were formerly guarded, and there is in addition a groove into which a wooden shutter used to be placed. It seems a thousand pities that this little chapel should be allowed to fall completely down, but one of the chancel walls will certainly collapse very speedily unless something is done to arrest decay. I was informed that beneath the building there is a vault, and I endeavoured to investigate

the matter, but the condition of the interior was such—nearly two feet thick in mire—that I was compelled to abandon my intention. Who built this edifice is not known; but its existence is mentioned, it would seem, for the first time in the fourteenth year of Edward III., when John Flambard de Bonhunt had license to give two messuages, twenty acres of arable land, five of pasture and three and a half of meadow in Newport to the Master and Brethren of the Hospital of St. Leonard in Newport to find a chaplain to celebrate Mass for the soul of the said John within his manor of Bonhunt in the Chapel of St. Elene there. So that at any rate we know the little chapel by the road-side to be dedicated to St. Helen.

The village street of Wicken-Bonant stands on the side of the brook known as Wicken or Bonant water, in many cases little bridges of plank leading from the road to the cottage gardens. The church, which is dedicated to St. Margaret, is small and for the most part new; the chancel seeming to be the only portion of any antiquity.

A short distance beyond Wicken-Bonant Church the old gabled house of the Bradburys comes in sight—now called Brick House, but formerly Wickham Hall. This family purchased the estate early in the second half of the 16th century from one Robert Chatterton. He had held the manor but a short time, having bought it from the Barle or Barley family, who had been owners for many generations. We read of them in 1445, 1475 and 1498, when one member, a wealthy mercer, was Lord Mayor of London. The Bradburys, whose coat-of-arms half hidden by creepers still stands above the door and

beneath a curious bust, remained at Wicken until 1740 or thereabouts, when the male line died out and the manor passed by the marriage of Dorinda Bradbury to her husband Joseph Sharp, by whom it was subsequently sold. The old manor house is evidently of Elizabethan age, with quaint ornamented gables and ancient chimneys, but it is not easy to get a good view of it, so shrouded is it by trees. From the road-side, however, a peep may be obtained of one of the gables, the weather-beaten hue of the brick being in marked contrast to the brilliant masses of rowan berries on the trees overhanging the garden-wall in front.

Farther along the winding tree-shaded road we get a glimpse of an old farm with curious chimneys. The country here is altogether charming, shady, verdant, and undulating. Across the fields on the right the white sides of a chalk-pit come in view somewhat unexpectedly, showing that I have reached that bit of Essex where this formation crops up. Ahead through the trees here and there the thatched roofs of the Arkesden cottages are visible, and it is not long before I find myself in a village which is even pleasanter than Wicken-Bonant.

The church, dedicated to St. Mary, is of fair size, but has been entirely, or almost entirely, rebuilt, and were it not for two tombs and a monumental brass might well be passed by. The fine monumental brass (now in the vicarage), which probably dates from the middle of the 15th century, bears the effigy of a man in armour; it once marked the grave of one of the Fox family. Beneath a double arched recess in the north wall there is a most interesting recumbent stone figure of a priest in full 15th century vestments.

Upon the other side of the church is the large tomb of Richard Cutte or Cutts, who died in 1592. This tomb has the effigies of Cutts and Mary his wife. It was a descendant of this worthy old Essex gentleman who was in later days the distinguished soldier Lord Cutts.

Arkesden village, like Bonant, has its little timber bridges across the brook which not far off takes its rise. The houses, or rather cottages, seem to have been set down anywhere and anyhow—a fact which adds not a little to the charm of the place. Over one of the bridges—in reality a causeway—we make our way up the hill towards the manor house of Wood Hall. The road is pretty and well-shaded with fine trees, beneath one of which lies a huge boulder,—

“Wonder to all who do the same espy,
By what means it could thither come, and whence.”

At the top of the hill on the right lies the entrance gate to Wood Hall. This house, unfortunately much modernised on the exterior, is built in a curious situation. Approaching it from the avenue you fancy that the front must be upon some other side, as—being built down the hill—one walks towards it on a level with the first floor windows, and no doorway is visible. Upon getting closer, however, the illusion is dispelled. Ancient though the house is, it does not pretend to picturesqueness; but it has associations with ancient times and it contains not a few things of interest, notably a marvellous fireplace beam. This beam, which I have sketched, forms the upper part of the present kitchen fireplace and is of great

size and length. The peculiarity of the carving is that it is more finished than is usually to be found in beams of the date, and also that, despite the lowness of the relief, the carvings by their fine execution have great rotundity. About two-thirds of this remarkable carving are shown in the sketch, and the puzzle is to comprehend under what condition of mind the carver could possibly have conceived a species



PORTION OF THE REMARKABLE FIREPLACE BEAM
AT WOODHALL, ARKESDEN.

C.R.B.B. 19.9.92.



of ornamentation which out-grotesques grotesque. How could he have evolved such terrible monsters and the extraordinary man-fish, or man in the moon as it appears at first sight, from the harness collar-maker hard at work at one end? The expression on the face of the man-fish in the original is simply splendid.

I have carefully refrained upon previous occasions from giving lists or descriptions of private property and works of art con-

tained in houses which I may have visited, but I have permission to make mention of one picture at Wood Hall which possesses peculiar interest. It represents Prince Henry, the son of James I., and its story is as follows:—The picture was built up in the wall of a house in High Street, Saffron Walden, at the time when the troubles between Charles and the Parliament began, and there it remained until a few years ago. Its existence was known to the dwellers in the house, as the tradition had been handed down. Eventually, a family who had lived there for more than a century left without taking the picture from its place of concealment. After leaving they desired to re-enter and to unwall the panel, but the new owners refused and unwallled it themselves. This picture was presented to the present owner of Wood Hall, and now hangs there. The Prince is represented in a handsome dress and wearing an order. At his right side he has a curious staff stated to be a staff of office, but I have been unable to trace any staff of office in connection with the titles of the Prince. The order round the neck is not one of any known order of chivalry, and may possibly be only a jewel. One peculiarity about the panel is that the corner where the Prince's name used to be painted has been cut out, and the space has been filled with a blank piece of wood. As a whole this picture, hitherto undescribed, is remarkable.

At the back of the manor house is one large old mullioned window, the only one left now to show what the original style of the house was, and a door near is stated to have been the scene of a curious episode in the days of persecution. Conformity,

as all know, was always a bone of contention in Puritan Essex, and the whole county was covered with a network of congregational bodies that were united by a simple though singularly complete organization into one church. Of the flocks in the immediate neighbourhood, and indeed for several miles round, the then owner of Wood Hall, Richard Cutts (father of Lord Cutts), was the protector. He was himself one of the Elders of the congregation of Arkesden, and his house was used as a meeting place where the services were held by one Day. It happened that a member of the congregation was once "wanted" upon some charge, and a guard of soldiers was sent to Wood Hall on a meeting night to arrest him. As the congregation issued from the door he was stopped and asked his name. "My name is Hephzibah, and I dwell in the land of Beulah," was his reply. No doubt the reply was meant seriously and was the outcome of fanaticism, but its effect was strange—one soldier cursed, while the other considered the man a lunatic and let him go. The preacher Day was a Nonconformist of some note; he had originally been ejected from a scholarship at Emanuel College, Cambridge. Day does not appear to have lived long as pastor at Wood Hall, for the records of his sect state that his death took place shortly after, and the names and dates of his successors are all known down to the present time when the congregation meets at Clavering.

The parish of Arkesden seems to have been split up in Saxon times between several owners, and even after the Conquest we find it divided between Eudo Dapifer, Magnaville, Warrene, Otburville,

and Gernon. As time went on the manor repeatedly changed hands, chiefly because it seems to have been a favourite dowry. About the middle of the sixteenth century it came by marriage into the family of Cutts, and it remained with them till it was sold in 1721 by Baron Cutts, of Gouran. The present possessor is Mrs. Birch Wolfe, to whom I must here express my gratitude for much information upon Essex traditions and history.



CHAPTER II.

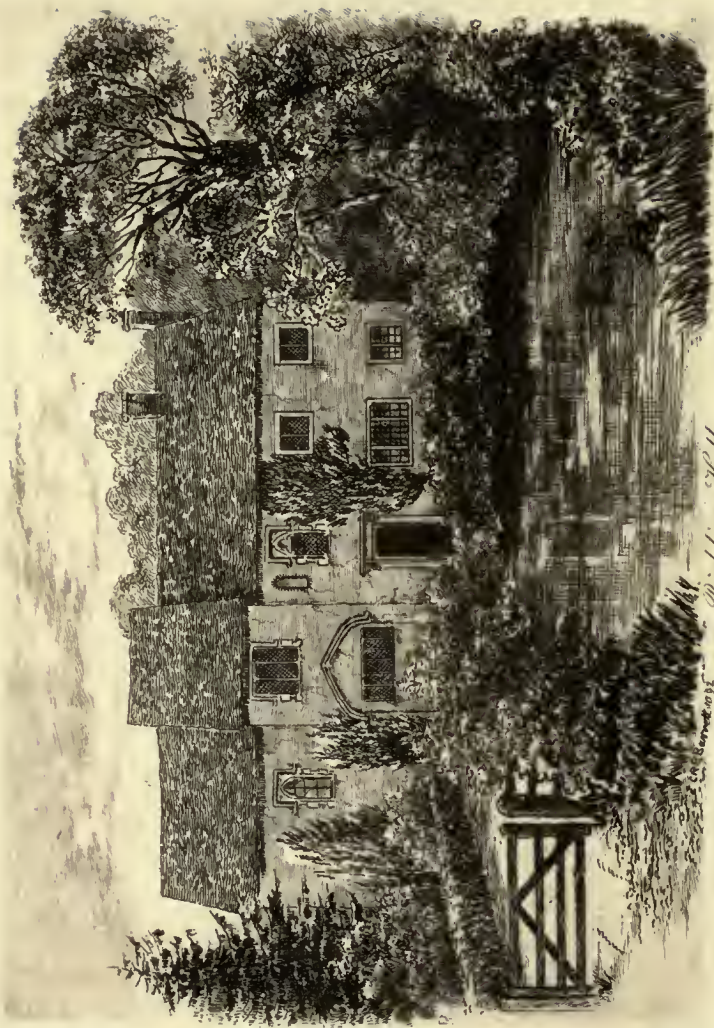
RICKLING TO FINCHINGFIELD.

RICKLING may be reached from Newport by two roads, which are most picturesque at all seasons of the year save winter. The high road runs along the side of the railway for some distance, and is beautifully wooded, especially near the entrance gates to Quendon Hall. Opposite the Gateway stand, high up on a knoll, the gaunt remains of an ancient windmill. The manor of Quendon has been owned not only by celebrated Essex families but also by royal personages. From Eudo Dapifer, who came over with William the Conqueror, the list includes the Magnavilles and the Bohuns; the descendants of the murdered Duke of Gloucester next appear in the list, to be followed by Henry V., Queen Katherine, Margaret, Queen of Henry VI., and lastly Elizabeth Woodville. In 1533 it ceased to be crown property, being sold to Newman of Wethersfield, who also held a moiety of the manor of Rickling Hall. Newman

pulled down the old manor-house which stood near the church, and built a new one some distance from the old site. This house was in its turn pulled down and rebuilt in the seventeenth century. The estate passed by the female line to the Wilfords of Kent, a family connected in a remote way with the Barretts of Avely, Essex. But in 1645 the estate was sold, and between this date and 1717 changed hands more than once, the name of the house having meanwhile been altered from Newman Hall to Quendon. In 1717 the place was sold to John Maurice, the second son of Sir William Maurice, Secretary of State to Charles II.¹ The village has a long street in which some of the houses are curious, notably one close beneath the church. Though much restored, nay, almost rebuilt, the church is remarkable for the double row of dormer windows in its extremely high-pitched roof. Opposite to it stands a curious old farm, and a little beyond is the King's Head Inn with the date 1721 moulded on its plaster front and surmounted by an attempt at a vase. The road to Rickling here branches off abruptly to the right and leads to the spacious and pleasant village green. Again the road bends off to the right, and one seems to be journeying back to Newport. Presently however, after not a few twists and turns, one comes in view of the interesting relic Rickling Hall, an old manor-house

¹ With regard to the Maurice family I am able to state a curious fact. Some years ago in an old Billingsgate house (which was being pulled down) a Sussex iron fireplace was discovered bearing the arms, date and initials of one of the Maurice family. The arms are gules, a lion rampant regardant, or, the crest a hawk perched upon the stump of a tree, or, armed and belled gules. This house was just opposite the Cock Tavern, and the Sussex iron fireplace is now used as the tavern sign—the hawk being compelled to do duty for a cock!





Richling Hall.

See page 102.

which has fallen very far from its former high estate. The present buildings, though ancient, are probably for the most part successors to a former house, which was very extensive, and moreover would seem to have been strongly fortified. On the south-west side traces yet remain of the keep mound, which was evidently once moated. Here some years ago an arched door yet existed, which (I was informed) was destroyed by a tenant who without licence commenced to dig there for buried treasure. Up the side of this mound the causeway may yet be traced. Of the hall itself, which stood within the outer moat and was quadrangular in shape, nearly two sides and a portion of the third are yet remaining. The arch of the gatehouse which fronted the drawbridge has been built up and converted into a billiard-room. The gateway was formerly surmounted by a tower, and records remain which state that the whole of the Hall was once embattled. Upon its inner side the moat is walled, and some defensive work formerly stood upon its inner face; at least I fancy that I detected traces of one corner tower. The mullioned windows upon the outside now remaining are very few, but present the peculiarity of having labels without returns. One window upon the inner side of the building has a label with the returns inwards instead of outwards. In various places small windows have been bricked up, but there is one which seems to be of a most unusual type and which furnishes the initial letter of this chapter. It is to be found half concealed by a comparatively modern lath and plaster addition to the house. I am not aware that I ever saw a window quite

of this form before: something resembling it is to be found at Butley Priory in Suffolk, but there the strange arrangement of the corner stone is absent. The interior of this old place has suffered sadly. Here and there within will be found an arched doorway, but destitute of all ornamentation. One room, possibly to be identified with a chamber known in ancient days as the King's Parlour, is roofed with oaken arched beams, which are supported upon chamfered plinths reaching to the floor, the whole being framed into a curiously moulded wall beam. A small portion of ancient staircase remains with a massive post and handrail, the balusters being of that quaint, flat, profile order, now alas! becoming yearly more rare. It is curious to note the dearth of handsome staircases in the county of Essex; why this should be so is inexplicable, seeing that so many other more portable relics remain *in situ*. In the wall of an outbuilding which is now used as a barn, facing the keep mound, are to be traced the built-up openings of a door and a pair of small windows. In the red brick wall above the door, though not immediately, a cross crosslet formed of black bricks is still to be seen. Could this have been the chapel entrance? Remains of other doors and windows are also visible in various parts of the outbuildings, but close inspection within and without gives no clue to their identity in the general plan of the place.

Rickling Manor has been a possession of the Magnavilles, and Beatrix de Saye, the heiress of this great family, died there in 1207, and was buried at Walden monastery. Rather more than a century later the Waldens were the holders, and with but a short period of

alienation it remained theirs until the early portion of the fifteenth century. Next through a female descendant it passed into the Langley family by marriage, and after one or two changes is to be found as part of the estates of the Cutts. With them it remained for rather more than a hundred years, being sold by John Cutts in 1626 to Thomas Michel of Hertfordshire.

The church of Rickling, dedicated to All Saints, though some say to the Blessed Virgin, is small and much restored. The tiny windows in the tower are however well worth notice, and within, beneath a recessed arch-tomb, stands a fine old triple-locked parish chest. There is also a tomb to Sir Henry Langley and Margaret his wife, who died in 1458 and 1453 respectively. Into the wall of the porch above the outer door a very mutilated inscription has been built, which is surmounted by a small mullet carved in stone. It seems almost a pity that this inscription should be exposed to the effects of the atmosphere; even now it is but a fragment, but I fear that in a few years' time it will altogether disappear.

At the beginning of this chapter I mentioned another road from Newport to Rickling; this is by the way of an old grassy lane, known as London Lane, which turns off from the road to Arkesden, not far from the old chapel at Wicken Bonhunt. In full summer time this narrow lane is worth traversing, when the lofty hedges and banks upon either side are gay with many a blossom and alive in places with fur and feather. But it is upon a fine day in autumn when this old-world path is seen at its best, with hazel and maple dressed in all their varied tints—the overhanging branches of the oaks now and again tinged with their later-year foliage, and shedding an acorn

carpet on to the sward. High and low the wild clematis hangs festooning the hedgerow with its profuse and feathery blooms, interspersed with waving fruit-bearing trailers of bramble showing both blossoms and berries green, red and black. Here and there that quaint shrub which bears an orange-seeded pink-shelled fruit makes a variation in the mass of colour, backed perhaps by dark green privet, or some of the bronze-leaved shrubs over which some other berry-bearing climber has hung its gorgeous sprays. But one word: try not London Lane except the day be fair: even the beauties of autumnal foliage cannot be enjoyed knee-deep in mire.

Regarding the Wilfords of Quendon and Rickling in the State Papers we find under date July 22, 1609, an order from the Earl of Salisbury to John Osborne, Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer, in which the goods of Francis Wilford, of Quendon, a recusant, are granted to one John Kinlock, together with the goods of five other persons. The Wilfords, a Catholic family, suffered not a little persecution. The first notice of Francis is in 1606, when his arrival from Spain (with letters) is notified to Chief Justice Popham. In the next year the goods of his kinsman James Wilford, of Lynam, Kent (also a recusant) were granted to a certain William Hicke. On May 7, 1611, is dated the lease to Henry Tufton of the King's two parts of the manors of Rickling and Quendon, Essex, and of the King's third part of a messuage called Sempringham Hed House, parish of St. Sepulchre, London, forfeited by the recusancy of James Wilford; also two parts of the reversion of the manor and rectory of Lenham and other lands, co. Kent, on the death of

Thomas, father of James Wilford, with certain reservations. In February 1626 a member of the family, a Jesuit priest, was found in the house of one Payne. He passed by the names of Reames and Peters. As Wilford was "lame of the gout," we are told the Duchess of Buckingham's usher became bail for his appearance. In January 1629 Thomas Wilford, then lately of the parish of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, has an information laid against him for not repairing to his parish church according to the Statute. In 1638 a Father John Wilford at Rome seems to have acted as banker for Christopher Windebank, the son of Secretary Windebank, while he was upon a grand continental tour by advancing sums of £25 and £50, a rather dangerous acquaintance we should imagine for the young man. Meanwhile a branch of the family in Kent had conformed and apparently was prospering. A letter dated 1639, unfortunately too long to quote, gives a most graphic and interesting account of an interview between Sir Thomas Wilford and the King, in which the Kentish man used language of the most outspoken character. Sir Thomas had journeyed all the way from home to Newcastle to say his say, and certainly accomplished his object. The Kentish Wilfords seem to have been a turbulent race, and in 1639 one of them, James Wilford, was committed to the gatehouse for two days for "cudgelling" a saltpetremen. During the same year one of the Quendon Wilfords "being a poor Catholic," as he states himself to be in a petition, was a prisoner in the counter, Wood Street. He begs to be allowed out to transact business occasionally as the custom was, without fear of the "pursuivants and such like troublesome persons, who for their own private gain, seek to deprive

him of that benefit." So for thirty three-years the Wilfords suffered for conscience' sake !

Elsenham, with the exception of its church, is not a village which contains much of interest. The church however is ancient, and possesses, besides a very fine Norman south door, several ancient monumental brasses ; there is moreover a large ancient key. This south door is remarkable for its carved columns and tympanum, the latter being unusual. Two of the brasses are those of John Walden, who died in 1400, and William Barlee 1521, representatives of two ancient Essex families who succeeded one another in the manor of Elsenham Hall ; the connecting link between them being that Katherine Walden, the sister and coheiress of the last male, John de Walden (1419), married John Barley, of Barley, in Hertfordshire.

Leaving the village of Elsenham behind and passing the brick towers of the new Elsenham Hall upon the right hand, which are half hidden by the woods, one soon comes to an old farmhouse known as Sand-pits Farm. A little beyond, in the adjoining parish of Henham, stands Prison Hall, otherwise known as Plegden or Plechedon. Presently the somewhat desolate church of Chickney appears on the left hand lying across the fields, and close to the road the neighbouring church of Broxted hard by the gabled and barge-boarded Hall. The next familiar object on the road is the tower and bell turret of Horham Hall which appears remote on the left, and finally ahead the beautiful spire of Thaxted, which tells me that I am crossing a line of country that I have treated elsewhere. At Thaxted I do not tarry, except to view a specimen of one of the old Thaxted knives which was not so long ago found and which was

kindly shown to me. It is of rude make, and though a clasp knife, has more the dimensions of a small pruning-hook ; the haft is formed of the butt of a stag's horn roughly sawn out down the middle. Passing swiftly through the old-world street of this quaint place I soon find myself at the top of the opposite hill, where a new and miraculous iron distance-post gives more than usual information. Here I turn off rather to the left, not however without a glance backward, and presently come to a pretty triangular green at the side of which stands a little house picturesque in its irregularity. From this point it is not far to Little Bardfield.



LITTLE BARDFIELD.

From an antiquarian point of view there is nothing to cause one to tarry at this village. The avenue of trees which leads to the church door from the road is a fine one, and indeed the timber hereabouts is very beautiful. Within the church the decorations appear to consist chiefly of candles, which are in evidence wherever they can possibly be placed. The village itself is small, and remarkable for a long and apparently most comfortable row of almshouses. On the road between Great and Little Bardfield, near a modern house and just where the path

diverges stands the old house known as the Chequers. It has a fine projecting porch with a quaint room above it, upon the gable of which are two sets of initials and dates, one on a beam S.P. ANNO. DOM. 1609, the other in parge work H.S. 1784. The woodwork of the doorway is good and the hinges are very heavy. With regard to the name Chequers (unless the house were formerly an inn) I have



been unable to trace the origin; the presence of initials upon the gable might be expected to assist in identification, but hitherto I have failed to discover any details.

The little town of Great Bardfield is well worthy of a visit. In its streets are not a few ancient houses, some with historic memories such as Place Farm, formerly the Place, with its tale of the Princess Elizabeth, who is known to have taken refuge there from persecu-

tion. Even now Place Farm has a few coats of arms in its Tudor windows, but as a whole the appearance of the building is hardly one which would suggest that it had a history. It was once the dwelling of the Bendlowes family of whom it may be remembered that one was the celebrated sergeant at law and Recorder of Thaxted. Farther down in the street the carved brackets of the Vine Hotel are quite worth notice; the bargeboards here are nothing remarkable, but there is a group of four octagonal chimneys which are evidently of ancient date. Near the green, which lies low, the town itself being for the most part on the hill, there is an old inn known as the White Hart, and bearing the date 1628 on its exterior. Like many another village Great Bardfield once possessed a market cross, which formerly stood in the middle of the town, but as was to be expected has long ago disappeared. The church of Great Bardfield, which is dedicated to St.



CURIOUS PISCINA. GT BARDFIELD.

Mary, is full of interest in many ways. It stands a little way out of the town and close by Great Bardfield Hall. Perhaps the most remarkable thing therein is an extraordinary piscina hewn out of the window jamb in the corner of the south aisle. There is another of more ordinary shape in the north aisle. The beams of the chancel also are very remarkable being carved and coloured in a most elaborate manner, their brackets mainly decorated with roses, but one bearing a centaur armed with a bow and arrow, the crest of the Bendlowes family, surmounted by the letters E. B. It is curious to note the presence upon these beams

of the monogram I H⁺ S. In the chancel is an altar-tomb to the memory of the famous sergeant, which now seems to be used as sedilia. The south door and porch are boldly carved though much weatherworn, the porch having two windows and recesses upon the east side only. In the various windows of the church are some interesting fragments of ancient glass; in one case a very mutilated crucifix appears, and in a window of the south aisle are three shields of the noble family of Mortimer. The occurrence of these shields here is a strange fact and cannot now be accounted for, except from the supposition that this family may have been benefactors, for it is certain that they held no land in Great Bardfield. Two helmets, still remaining in the church, were set up on the burial of two members of the Lumley family, who for about a century, *i.e.* from 1621 to 1725, lived at a house now destroyed called Great Lodge.¹ Lastly the stone screen which fills in the chancel-arch remains to be mentioned. It is curious, and indeed rather more curious than beautiful, from an architectural point of view at least. To all appearances it has been tampered with by the addition of a modern cross where no doubt a genuine rood once stood. Surely a less objectionable cross might have been put up than the one which it has pleased somebody to erect.

The Bendlowes family need to be briefly mentioned. The original Bendlowes was one Christopher. His son William, the eminent lawyer, was born in 1516, and received his education at St. John's College, Cambridge. Leaving the university without taking

¹ Of this once magnificent dwelling only the stables now remain, and these when the house was pulled down were turned into a farmhouse.

a degree, he entered Lincoln's Inn and was called to the bar. Subsequently he represented three Cornish boroughs in the Parliaments of 1553—4. He became serjeant-at-law in 1555. In the following year, being an ardent Catholic, he was employed to suppress Lollards and heretics in Essex. He died in 1584, leaving a son William, whose grandson was the poet Edward Benlowes, known in his day as "Benevolus," on account of the manner in which by generosity he ruined his estate and eventually died a pauper. Edward Benlowes was buried by the charity of his friends in St. Mary's Church, Oxford. He was not a poet of any note, despite the commendations which he received from Davenant, Payne Fisher, Quarles, and Phineas Fletcher. Warburton ridiculed Benlowes, and said that he was not less famous for his own bad poetry than for patronising bad poets. A furious onslaught was also made upon the poetry of Benlowes by Butler. The title of his chief work is *Theophila, or Love's Sacrifice, a Divine Poem*, which, in good condition, is valued by collectors for its fine illustrations. In his old age Benlowes deserted Catholicism, and in consequence became estranged from the few relatives he possessed. Probably his poverty contributed to the estrangement, for his niece, whom he had handsomely dowered in the days of his wealth, had the ingratitude to desert him upon the score of creed.

In the State Papers there are but two references to Great Bardfield, and these both refer to the manor. The first, dated July 24, 1550, consists of a grant to Sir Thomas Wrothe, Gent. of the Privy Chamber, of the manor of Bardfield, with the Great and Little Park thereof, and the manors of Chigwell and

Westhatche, co. Essex. Curiously enough on the back of the second leaf of this paper is a draft (*temp.* Charles I.) of the bond of Hugh Justyce, plumber, to keep in repair the waterworks at Oxford and Carfoxe (Carfax Conduit in Oxford), made at the charge of Otho Nicholson. The second paper is dated 1623, and consists of a note from Attorney-General Coventry to Secretary Conway stating that Alderman Lumley is to pay a fine on the manor or burgh of Bardefield, Essex, and also to take out a new patent from the Commissioners for Defective Titles, the former patent being defective. The name of Benlowes occurs once, viz., in January 1555, when John Carrow, Clerk of the Peace, forwards to Sir William Petre a complaint of the corrupt conduct of Mr. Benlowes, J.P. of Essex, and encloses an account of fines assessed at the Quarter Sessions at Chelmsford, by Mr. Benlowes and other Justices.

The road now leads past the village green and winds not a little till a small bridge over the narrow and sluggish river Pant or Blackwater is reached. Here I turn off through a field path which leads up the hill through a barley field, here and there dotted with vivid blue cornflowers. Finchingfield lies on the left, while ahead stands the dazzling white windmill of Wethersfield now lazily turning, and then as the fitful breeze springs up going round merrily. Hard by is Wethersfield church with its emerald green copper spire, a striking contrast to the rest of the building and indeed to the village itself. As a village there is nothing to see in Wethersfield beyond the church. An old house now used as an inn stands opposite to the churchyard gates, but its front has been recently modernized beyond recognition. In the vicarage there is, I under-

stand, a library bequeathed to the parish in the reign of Charles II., by a parson named Henry Pelsant. But the church itself is full of interest within, and while waiting for the keys I took the opportunity of sketching a very fair early window, which will be found at the west end. The chancel, which has a fine screen (much restored), is full of points worthy of close attention. Upon the north side is a recessed arch within which is an ancient tomb, probably that of the founder. Close to this stands a door with a pointed arch, now leading into a vestry. Near the door, though not in its original position, is a most beautiful marble or alabaster tomb, raised to the memory of Sir Roger Wentworth and his wife Dame Anne, who died in 1539 and 1536 respectively. This tomb has been terribly knocked about in days gone by. The coat armour which was formerly blazoned upon the shields round the base is now almost obliterated, but luckily a record of it has been preserved. The effigies of the old knight and his wife are beautifully cut, and both armour and clothing were once a mass of gold and colours, to judge from the worn patches remaining in the inner folds. Sir Roger rests his head upon a wreath and his feet upon his helmet, still topped by his unicorn crest; alas, the twisted horn has vanished therefrom! Dame Anne wears a mantle, a veil and curious head-gear. In addition to being painted, the head-gear is engraved with a most delicately-executed pattern in very fine lace-work. At the head of the lady are angels. These



WETHERSFIELD.

beautiful effigies rest on a slab of grey marble. High on the wall above is placed a funeral helmet with its crest. The brass inscription has vanished, as also have six of the ten shields which were formerly round the base of the tomb. Till the end of the last century this monument stood in the middle of the chancel, but it was, I understand, subsequently removed to the south side, and finally it was placed, some few years ago, in the north side, where it now stands. The south side of the chancel is remarkable for the series of early English arches, which, beginning with a curious double piscina, run on continuously, forming sedilia, a doorway into the sacristy, and finally a plain recess. The nave roof is a fair one, and there are eight



clerestory windows. At the south end of the nave is a curious corbel, which recalls one of those at Beeleigh Abbey, near Maldon. Upon the south door are the remains of a huge handle, and its heavy iron hinges are decorated with rude chisel work. The door itself is bold. Outside in the porch are some quaint bosses, and there stands a disused font—now used as a receptacle for waste paper. In the windows of the south side of the church are some curious relics of ancient glass, and several shields of arms. One fragment represents the head of the prophet Daniel, another is apparently a grotesque, possibly meant for a demon. Two female heads are also pre-

served, one crowned, the other surrounded by an aureole. In this same south aisle there is also a piscina, with a niche above it in which there are relics of painting yet visible. The north aisle does not present any points of particular interest, except a piscina with a trefoil head, and a corbel above it once carved to represent a head, but from which the face has been chiseled off, and a rude ornament incised upon the surface, seemingly by an amateur. The other monuments in the church call for no special remark, though one, that of Joseph Youngman, alias Clerk, bears a curious inscription; and the slab which covers the remains of Simon Delboe, Coll. S. S. Trinitatis, Cantab., who died July 21, 1685, aged 27, has upon it a coat of arms, and a crest which seems unknown to the heralds. In the churchyard upon the north side, is a large brick tomb topped with a slab which has been broken to fragments, though formerly it was completely covered by an inscription. It covers the grave of one Thomas Fitch, who died in 1702, leaving a considerable bequest to the town for educational purposes. The story goes that an enraged relative thought that by destroying the tombstone upon which the bequest was cut in full, he could nullify the terms of the will. He accordingly broke it one night with a large hammer: it is needless to add that his expectation was not fulfilled. Close by this tomb are two ancient wooden grave posts, which, I am informed, mark the spot where those who died in a time of pestilence were buried. Curiously enough, in the churchyard of Greenstead juxta Ongar there is a similar post; but about this last I could gather no information.

The parish of Wethersfield appears from times considerably remote to have been divided into two manors, named Wethersfield

and Codham Hall respectively, of which Wethersfield was the largest. It was originally held by Henry de Cornhill, a citizen of London, as far back as the year 1190. By the marriage of his daughter Joan it passed into the Neville family, as her husband was Hugh de Neville. Of this worthy a wonderful lion story is related, from which it would seem that while in Palestine with Richard I. he seized a lion by the beard and stabbed him with a sword, after having previously wounded him with an arrow! The representation of the exploit was cut on his seal. He died in 1222, having filled, with other smaller appointments, the offices of Chief Forester, Chief Justice of the Forests of England, and King's Treasurer. Buried at Waltham Abbey, he was succeeded by his second son Sollan, who was one of the justices itinerant, and whose literary remains consist of the Testa de Neville. The next holder of Wethersfield was also a Justice of the King's Forest, but in 1244 being accused and convicted of certain malpractices, died of grief the following year, and was succeeded by his son Hugh. It would seem that this manor was held by the curious tenure of placing the first dish on the King's right hand at the Coronation Banquet. Hugh turned traitor, and his estates were for a time forfeited, though they were subsequently restored. The next de Neville, Sir John, held the estates by another curious tenure, by which he was obliged to furnish certain articles of clothing for the King's army in Wales. He died without issue in 1358, and the manor passed away from this ancient family. Successively held by William, Earl of Northampton, and his son Humphrey, it next went by marriage into the possession of Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester. Thomas of Woodstock had

an only surviving daughter, Anne, who married thrice, each of her husbands in turn possessing Wethersfield, viz., Thomas, Earl of Stafford, Edmund, Earl of Stafford, and William Bouchier, Earl of Essex. Her son, a Lancastrian, was slain in 1460 at Northampton and upon the success of the house of York the estate became Crown property. By Henry VIII. it was exchanged for another manor with Sir John Wentworth, of Codham Hall, who thus united the whole of the parish.

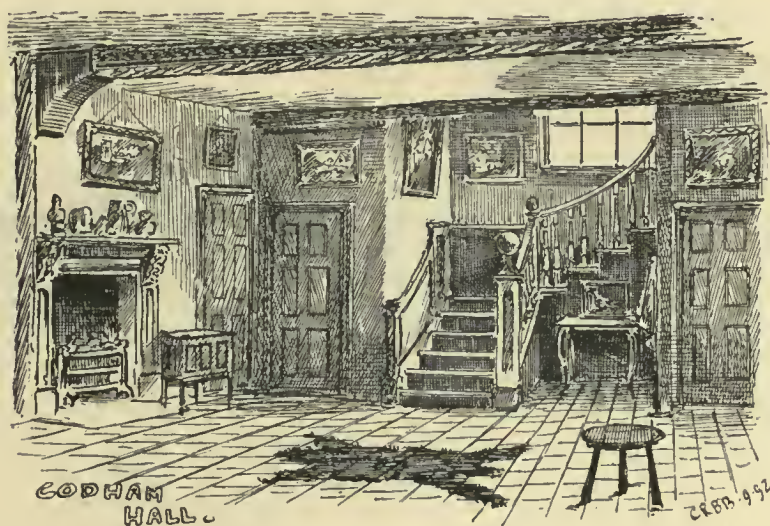
Codham Hall is so called from a de Codham family who dwelt there from the time of the Conquest until 1255, as far as records show, though the name appears later in connection with Colne Priory, and a certain John de Codham died Prior of Dunmow in 1270.

When the de Codhams died out and the Coggeshalls came in is uncertain, but it must have been within the space of forty years, as we find a Sir Ralph at Codham in 1295. The Coggeshalls, who originally belonged to Hertfordshire, migrated in the days of Edward I., to Essex. Branches of the family settled in London, and also in Suffolk and Norfolk. A brass in Orford Chapel, Suffolk, records the burial place of one of them. Eight generations of the Coggeshalls resided at Codham, and the eighth, a Sir William, married Antiocha, the daughter of the celebrated Sir John Hawkwood, of Sible Hedingham. Her eldest daughter, Blanche, married John Doreward, of Bocking. To her third daughter, Margaret, who married William Green, of Widdington, Codham Hall fell as a portion. She died in 1494, having previously sold the estate to Henry Wentworth, the first of the Wentworths who settled in

Essex. It is the tomb of his son, Sir Roger Wentworth, and of Dame Anne (Tyrell) that is now such an ornament to the chancel of Wethersfield Church. Those who are curious as to the intricate history of the various branches of the Wentworth family should consult the interesting and exhaustive book upon this subject written by Mr. William Loftie Rutton. It was by right of his wife that Sir Roger became owner of Gosfield, and we find that his eldest son migrated thence, probably pulling down the original manor house there and building a new and more magnificent dwelling, a portion of which now remains. But to return to Codham Hall. When the Wentworth estates were dismembered in 1622, we find that Codham Hall remained with the Lady Wentworth for her life only. Upon the death of this lady, Codham Hall and its manor was inherited by Lady Catherine, her granddaughter, the only child of her daughter Lucy, Countess of Cleveland. Lady Catherine, who married a Mr. William Spencer, died childless in 1670, and the heir of her husband, a nephew, sold Codham Hall to Sir Richard Pyne, Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, who entailed it upon his son, Mr. Henry Pyne. With regard to Henry Pyne, Holman relates a curious story. He was killed in a duel by Theophilus Biddulph, the son and heir of Sir Theophilus Biddulph of Kent, Kt. and Bart. The meeting took place at Chelsea, upon Saturday morning, Feb. 28, 171 $\frac{2}{3}$. Upon the morning of the duel, his mother, on waking in broad daylight, saw his apparition at Codham, all bloody. She awakened her husband—a second husband—and told him. He tried without avail to persuade her that she had had a vivid dream. On going down stairs upon the stair way and turning into

a room she saw the same figure again. After breakfast she was persuaded by her husband to take the air in the garden ; they had just left the house when a liveried servant galloped up and brought tidings of the fatal result of the duel. It appears that Mr. Biddulph and the seconds were tried at the Old Bailey—the principal being convicted of manslaughter, but the seconds acquitted.

Codham Hall is nowadays but a fragment of what it used to



be, and, in fact, nearly every vestige of antiquity has been destroyed there. The chapel close by has been converted into cottages, and were it not for a piscina inside one of them, it would be hard to recognize it as ever having been a place of worship. It seems that this chapel was in use until the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The front door of Codham opens into a wide hall, at the end of which the staircase leads up to the first floor. The beam which crosses the

ceiling is handsomely carved. Up stairs there are two or three doors which have a central panel of good oak carving, and in one of the rooms a carved beam is to be seen surmounting a fireplace. These few relics of ornament I was kindly permitted to sketch, and I was also able to obtain in the waning light a hurried drawing of the hall. There is a tradition that Samuel Butler, the author of *Hudibras*, was for a time a dweller at Codham, and that a portion at least of his poem was penned there.

In common with very many of the parsons of Essex, those in this immediate neighbourhood seem to have been thorns in the side



FIRE-PLACE BEAM, CODHAM.

of Laud. We find Mr. Daniel Rogers, lecturer of Wethersfield, in 1630 included in a list as "not conformable in opinion nor practice." Again, on June 12, 1632, the Commissary, Dr. Aylett sends to Bishop Laud a certificate concerning certain lecturers in Essex, upon inquiry made by order of the Bishop. The inquiry principally affected their conformity. He refers to several places, among them being Wethersfield and Finchingfield, and reports some cases of the omission of the surplice in reading prayers, also that in two cases the "lecturers" did not come into church until after prayers had been read.

From Wethersfield to Finchingfield is by no means a long walk, and the way takes us through pleasant country. The village of Finch-

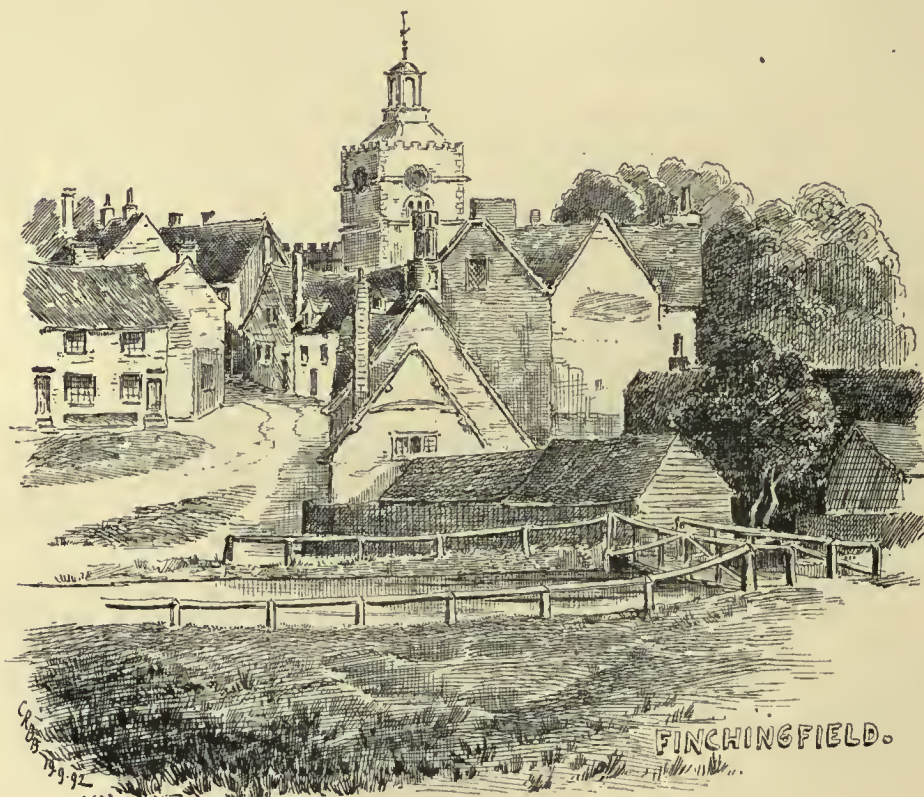
ingfield lies curiously, for in its centre the street runs sharply down to a brook which skirts the bottom of the village green. Nor does this village green resemble the ordinary type of such open spaces, for it lies on the side of an equally steep hill. Standing on the upper edge of the green you are about on a level with the churchyard on the opposite side of the little valley. In front of you are the irregularly-built houses piled one on the other, and, topping them all, the old Norman tower of the church. Close by the church stand the quaint old timber-built almshouses, somewhat in the same position as the old school-house of Felstead. The houses at this end



CODHAM HALL DOOR PANELS.

of Finchingfield are of some antiquity, and there is moreover at least one good specimen of hammered iron in the shape of an inn sign—the Green Man. But the church naturally claims the most particular notice, for it possesses a feature of its own which will not be readily found elsewhere. The interior of the Norman tower has a most curious arcade upon each side of the Norman tower arch. This arcade does not completely surround the tower, but ceases along the north and south sides. It is a kind of architectural puzzle, of which the solution is yet doubtful. The west door of the tower has a fine Norman arch with a triple reveal and zigzag mouldings,

Within the church is a fair oak screen and a number of monuments, of which one is very well worth notice. It is in the shape of an altar tomb, and bears upon its slab the effigies in brass of John Berners (1500) and his wife Elizabeth (1523), the daughter of Simon Wise-



man. The costumes of these figures, though damaged, are full of interest. Round the base of the tomb are eight figures of ecclesiastics under canopies, and there are also eight escutcheons. The south porch is a fine one, it contains two good windows on each side, with a panel between them. Excellent, too, is the door of the porch, and it

is only to be regretted that the two niches on the external buttresses of this most interesting porch should have suffered so much from weather or ill-treatment. The remaining tombs in the church hardly possess any interest; the inscriptions are long thereon and for the most part fulsome. It is not easy to get up a feeling of enthusiasm over a monument which records that a man "did by



a voluntary constancy hold his peace seven years." But this, it appears, is what William Kemp, Esq., of Spains Hall, did. The inscription adds that he was "pious, just, hospitable, and master of himself so much, that what others scarce doe by force and penalties," &c.

Finchingfield is quite a parish of small manors and old manor houses, all of which save Spains Hall have now degenerated into

farmhouses. Their names are curious, and comprise Justins, Brent Hall, Sculpins, Petches or Peches, and Cornet or Cornish Hall, beside several others. Of these, Brent Hall was the property of Edward Benlowes the poet, and was of course alienated by him, not, however, before he addressed thence some complimentary verses to his brother poet Quarles. Peches belonged to the Berners family, who appear to have held the land without a break from Norman times



until 1729, when the male line had become extinct and a descendant of a daughter conveyed the manor to a Braintree apothecary.

Of another estate in the neighbourhood, formerly known as Boyton or Boynton, we find that two carucates of land there were anciently held by William de Reynes by the serjeanty of keeping for the King five wolf-dogs.

CHAPTER III.

PANFIELD, BOCKING AND BRAINTREE.



PANFIELD, or Pantfield, is a village some three miles from Braintree, and about the same distance from Codham Hall. The small church, dedicated to St. Mary, is built of flint and stone, and is of late perpendicular style. The restorers have been at work, but the south porch of fine old timber has not been touched, and within the building on the north side is a recessed tomb. It was, however, to the manor house that I desired chiefly to make a pilgrimage on my way to Bocking and Braintree, and I merely glanced at the church in passing. Panfield Hall is a most interesting relic of one of the comparatively smaller Tudor manor houses of Essex, and like most of its compeers originally stood within a moat. This moat has been completely filled up, an unusual circumstance in this county abounding in moated granges. Reduced though it is in size, Panfield Hall is still by no means a small dwelling, and the presence of its cupola-topped tower imparts not a little dignity to its ivy-clad front. The base of this tower forms a porch above the arched door, on which is graven in stone the coat of arms which furnishes the

initial letter of this chapter. These arms are those of the Symonds family, and their blazon runs as follows :—

Arms.—Azure a chevron engrailed between three trefoils slipped or.

Crest.—Out of a mural coronet or a boar's head argent, tusked of the first, crined gules.

So are the arms blazoned in the Visitation of 1634. Burke, however, gives the crest as out of a mural coronet chequy argent and azure a boar's head of the first crined sable. The arms in the Visitation, however, have the following note appended :—"The Auntiant Armes of Richard Symonds of Great Yeldham in com. Essex, son of John Symonds of Newport in com. Salop, gent, with the guift of this crest all w'ch S^r Ri. S^t George, Knt. Clarenceulx King of Armes exemplified by l^{rs} pattents dated in the first yeare of King Charles, the xth day of January a^o 1625, to the said Richard Symonds & to his posterity for ever." I incline therefore to accept the Visitation blazon.

A very fine stack of four chimneys yet stands, and many of the old mullioned windows of the Hall still remain, but the coloured glass which glowed therein has all disappeared, notably the pane bearing the name Gresild, widow of John Hind, 1461. Within the house no carving is now visible, but I was informed by the son of the occupier that there is a somewhat remarkable ceiling and screen. Unfortunately it is now quite impossible, owing to certain structural alterations, to get at this spot, and hence I was unable to view it myself. It appears that behind the tower, and extending away from it for nearly

half the length of the main roof, the ceiling was beautifully worked in plaster with many mouldings and pendants. This was much damaged by workmen a few years since, the pendants being knocked off right and left. At the end of this apartment the wall is handsomely decorated with parge-work, and in the centre high up are worked the royal arms. It is well that a record of the existence of



this fine ceiling should be preserved. Whether this chamber was formerly the hall or the chapel I was unable to ascertain, but I incline to think that it was probably the hall. A view of the arms would of course determine the date of construction, but this (as I have said) it was impossible to obtain, though permission would have been readily granted.

The manor of Panfield at the time of the Survey was held by

Robert de Watervile under Richard FitzGilbert, and remained in this family for six generations, the last in the male line being a Sir John, who died childless in 1330. To him succeeded his sister Joan, who successively married Richard de Mulford and Sir William de Langham. By her first husband she had no issue. Panfield continued in the Langham family till the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the heiress, Alice Langham, married John Cotton. His son sold Panfield to Sir Henry Gawdy in 1611, and since that period the manor has repeatedly changed owners. The Symonds family held the manor for fifty years (1641 to 1691), and the carving above the door is certainly of this date. It is interesting to note that the Cottons of Panfield were ancestors of the celebrated Sir Robert Bruce Cotton, the antiquary, to whose labours we owe the foundation of the Cottonian Library.

Formerly there stood in the parish of Panfield, not far from the church, a priory, but of it no relics now remain, though the name is kept up by two farms known as Great and Little Priory. This religious house is known to have been in existence in 1250, but the exact date of its foundation is uncertain. Record remains that the "maneriolum" of Panfield was given by Waleran FitzRalph to the Abbey of St. Stephen in Normandy, A.D. 1070, and this gift seems to have been confirmed. It is reasonable to suppose that a priory was erected here, which became a cell to the parent house in Normandy. In 1285, as an alien house, it was seized by Edward II. in order to prevent money being taken out of the kingdom. The revenues of Panfield were again confiscated in 1337 by Edward III., who farmed out the land for a period

of years. Subsequently the ecclesiastics were restored to their possessions, and remained there till 1414, when the general suppression of alien houses took place. Henry V. granted the priory to one John Woodhouse, to be held by the service of a red rose ; and we meet with this tenure again in the reign of Edward IV., the day of presentation of the rose being "St. John Baptist's." In 1472 the priory lands passed into the possession of the Prior and Convent of Canterbury, and remained with them till the general suppression, when, together with Bocking Park, it was granted to Sir Giles Capel, of Rayne Hall. The priory lands were almost immediately sold, and have since then repeatedly changed hands.

In the State Papers, Panfield, Essex, occurs but twice. In February, 1635—36, the parson of Panfield, Mr. Jenkinson, was one of the "compurgators" of William Frost, clerk of Middleton Essex. Frost was convicted of incest and adultery ; the case was amply proved, and disclosed a most scandalous mode of life in the clerical defendant. On July 27, 1640, William Lord Maynard writes to the Council from Easton respecting the insolences of the soldiers billeted in Essex, "which every day increase by new attempts, insomuch as they have now within these few days taken upon them to reform churches, and even in the time of divine service to pull down the rails about the communion tables, etc." He goes on to mention that at Ickelinton (Ickleton), in Cambridgeshire, the minister was forced to "run over a river," and at Panfield, near Braintree, to forsake his charge and family to save his life.



BOCKING village street straggles very far afield, and extends from beyond its church right into the middle of what is now known as the town of Braintree. The church stands in its avenued graveyard and within the lofty crenelated wall which separates the time-raised graveyard from the road beneath. It is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and is noteworthy for some rather interesting oak carving and an early brass (John Doreward, 1420). The carving is mainly in the roof of the aisles, where the brackets bear the Vere "mullet" and among other devices a shield charged with two estoiles and six cross crosslets fitchée. In the nave, which has a clerestory of eight windows, the brackets have carved upon them the mullet and the Bouchier Knot. The entrance to the vestry has some old panelling worked into a wainscot. Upon the north side of the chancel hangs an old Cromwellian steel cap. Two piscinæ still remain, one in the chancel and the other in the south aisle. Externally the church can hardly be seen from the graveyard owing to the abundance of trees, but viewed from the garden of Bocking Hall, or from the field gate leading to Dorewards Hall, the tower appears to advantage. From the latter spot I took a sketch. Bocking is what is known as a "peculiar," and is ruled over in matters ecclesiastical by a Dean, for so the rector is styled. The parish can boast at least one distinguished parson, viz., John Gauden,

D.D., Bishop of Worcester, to whom may certainly be ascribed the authorship of "*Ἐἰκὼν βασιλική*," the Pourtraicture of His Sacred Majestie in his Solitudes and Sufferings," long attributed to Charles I. Curiously enough, for preaching a sermon before the House of Commons on November 29th, 1640, he was rewarded by a large silver tankard inscribed "*Donum honorarium populi Anglicani, in parliamentario congregati, Johanni Gauden.*" It appears that Gauden himself avowed his authorship of the *Ἐἰκὼν* and pressed his claims on Clarendon for substantial rewards. Receiving Exeter first, he was translated to Worcester instead of to Winchester, and in consequence, it is stated, died of vexation, September, 1662.

Bocking Hall stands just without the churchyard, and is a decidedly interesting old house, though some of the oak carving therein has most assuredly been imported recently. Within are three rooms in panel, one of them being the large entrance hall, and in this hall is a long and massive oaken table. A few old pictures, which belong to the house and are let with it, still hang on the walls, but these need some attention to arrest the progress of decay. Two are by T. Sadler (1700), and represent evidently a husband and wife; a third, that of a man, is by J. Maston (1732); and lastly, there is a very interesting pair of boys in Cavalier dress, one of whom is toying with a tame jackdaw. Possibly these two boys were the sons of Sir Robert Barker, K.C.B., by his first wife Judith, daughter of Mr. George Stoddart, of Mottingham, Kent. The most curious thing, however, in this old house is a passage which leads down from the roof by means of a kind of stairway to the ground, passing behind

the panelling. In a side wall at the west end gable, about the spot where this passage should by rights have an exit beneath the ivy, may just be discerned a built-up arched door.

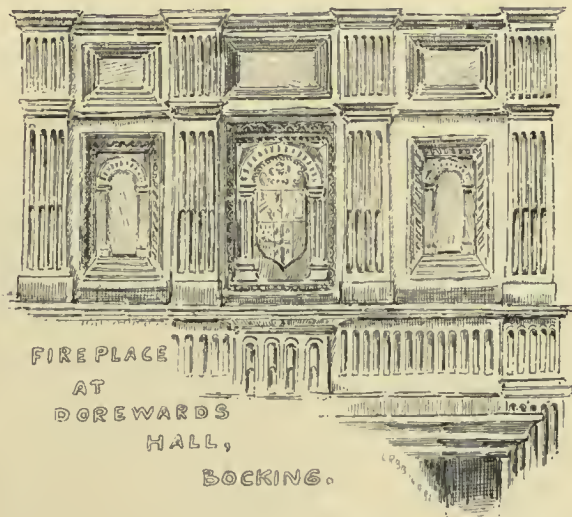
Before the time of the Conquest the manor of Bocking Hall was given to the priory of St. Saviour's, Canterbury, the exact date of the grant being 1006, and it would appear that until the suppression of



DOREWARDS HALL.

monasteries, Bocking remained Church property. After this event, in 1544, it passed by purchase to Roger Wentworth, a son of the owner of Codham Hall. For four generations it remained in the Wentworth family, and then passed to the Barkers. Towards the end of the 17th century Sir William Barker, a judge and baronet, got rid of Bocking by a mortgage to a widow of Stratford-le-Bow, by name Priscilla Cobourne. Dorewards Hall, another manor-house, stands in

the fields but little removed from the road to Braintree and on the other side of the village street. It has a very picturesque appearance at one end, with its lofty gable flanked by two slender turrets, and pierced by at least one large and handsome mullioned window. Unfortunately an interesting inscription in the pediment above this window was recently destroyed by the ladder of a clumsy workman. Within, there is not a great deal to see in this



old house nowadays, with the exception of a finely-executed though plainly designed carved fireplace, which bears in its central panel a shield of six quarterings dated 1579. Of these two are blank, viz., Nos. 2 and 6, but I believe the complete list to be—

1. Thursby. 2. Fodringhay. 3. Lyndsey (?) 4. Doreward.
5. Coggeshall. 6. Harsicke.

Holman gives Skowling instead of Lyndsey, but I can find no arms belonging to any such name. The same authority

mentions that in his day there were many escutcheons of glass in the windows at Dorewards, and he gives a long and particular list of what there were among them, mixing up devices ecclesiastical and otherwise, such as gules, a cross vert (heraldry!)—round the cross a wreath of thorns gules!—underneath on each side the pedestal of the cross (*sic*)—two whips of three cords each knotted argent the handles ended or!

Edward Thursby built the front gable of Dorewards Hall, and also put up the escutcheon above the fireplace. Dorewards Manor was originally held, in the reigns of John and Henry III., by Robert de Bocking. Two generations afterwards it was sold, in 1316, to Ralph Doreward. The Dorewards had been settled in Bocking since the reign of Henry III.; and they appear to have possessed the faculty of adding estate to estate and prospering in the world.

Early in the 15th century we find the patrimony greatly increased, and the Doreward of those days (1414) a learned lawyer, a Member of Parliament, and Speaker of the House of Commons. He was also subsequently Sheriff of Essex and Herts for the years 1425 and 1432. Hitherto the marriages of the Dorewards do not seem to have allied them with great Essex families, but John Doreward made a match with Blanche Coggeshall. He died in 1462, dividing his estate among his five children, John, William, Richard, Ralph, and Elizabeth. By the year 1495 the male line of Dorewards was extinct, and the total possessions of the family were divided among three sisters, co-heiresses, the daughters of Elizabeth Doreward, who had married Thomas

Fodringhay, or Woodrising, having issue three daughters, Margaret, Ellen, and Christian. Margaret married a Beaupré; Ellen married Henry Thoresby, and to her Dorewards fell as a share; Christian married John de Vere, who subsequently became fourteenth Earl of Oxford, and whose nickname was "Little John of Campes." Margaret Beaupré did not live long, and her share was divided between the Thoresbys and the Veres. In the Thoresby family Dorewards remained until the year 1637, when it was sold with two other manors adjoining, by name Bradfords and Harries, both of which had been in the Doreward family for two centuries. The Thoresby family, as the name tells us, was of Danish origin, and originally appears to have settled in the North Riding of Yorkshire, where it remained until the migration into Essex. Traces of members of the family occur now and again, and we read that a John Thoresby, who was Bishop of St. David's and Worcester, was translated to York in October, 1352. He was sometime Lord Chancellor, and was created a Cardinal by Pope Urban V. A younger branch of the Thoresbys settled in Norfolk and intermarried with the Fodringhays.

Of a daughter of Sir Roger Wentworth, the first of his name who was settled at Bocking, Sir Thomas More tells a wonderful story. It will be found in the dialogue of the first book of his English works, in which he defends the miracles performed by images, saints, and on pilgrimages, although admitting that some miracles were "falsely feigned." Sir Thomas then proceeds to tell of a "wonderful work" wrought a few years before on the daughter of Sir Roger Wentworth, a girl twelve years old,

who being "in a marvellous manner vexed and tormented by the devil" was brought and laid before the image of the Virgin at Ipswich, "where in the sight of many people though her countenance was grisly changed, her mouth drawn aside, and her eyes laid out upon her cheek, yet she as well as all the remanent there, were in the presence of all the company, restored to their good state perfectly cured and suddenly."

Between Bocking Church and Bradford Street—a long road which is so named from Bradford Manor—there is little of interest except a very small cottage with a well-carved beam. Bradford Street itself has many and various points which need more than passing notice. At its very extremity, where the river winds through some beautifully laid out grounds, upon the other side of the bridge stands a most picturesque mill, at the present time desolate and disused. A mill is known to have existed on this site as long ago as in 1476.

Passing along Bradford Street, the first object of interest consists of a curious carved oak upright which represents the head and body of a man terminating in an ornamental plinth pedestal. This for some years stood as a corner post to the Six Bells Inn, but has recently been built into the wall of that house high up between the gables. I was informed, with what truth I cannot say, that this carving (evidently not originally a corner post), which more resembles the side plinth of a handsome fireplace, had been removed to the Six Bells from Leighs Priory when that grand old place was for the most part pulled down.

Not far from the Six Bells and upon the same side of the road

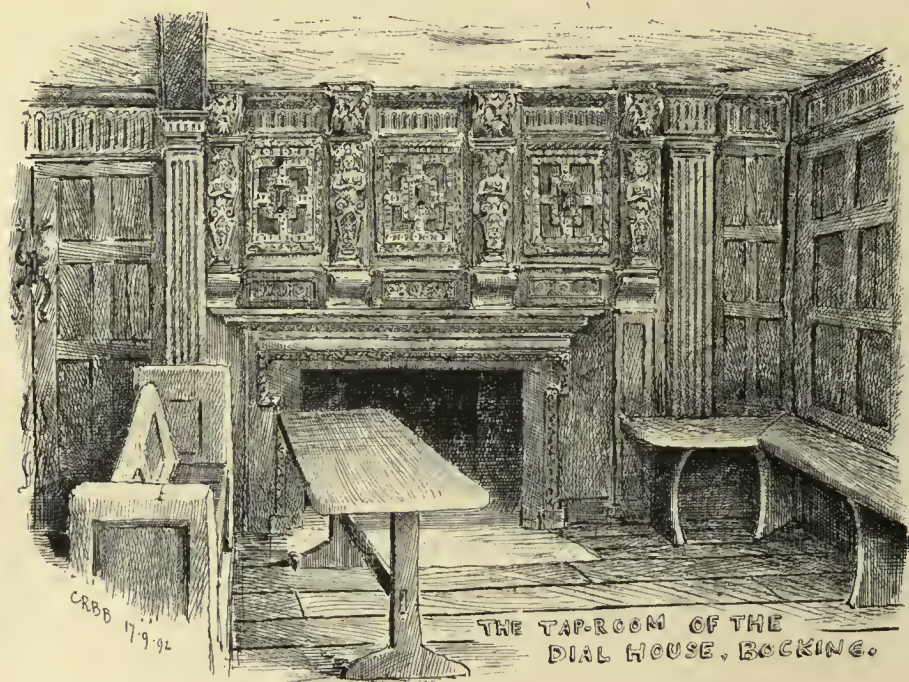
stands an ancient alehouse, known from a sundial upon its outside by the sign of the Dial House. Here the beams on the side are well carved and not ordinary in design. The tap-room within is really well worth seeing. Panelled throughout with oak, some of the mouldings of which are very unusual, it possesses a beautiful fireplace still in a good state of repair despite the wear and tear of time. This old tap-room is most primitive. In one corner a sort of pew remains which once contained the "beer-barrels," and was used as a bar. In the opposite corner a wall cupboard by the fireplace has yet its ornamental hinges. Near the window one of the strong seats pierced with a small and much worn heart-shaped hole, beneath which is a little drawer, shows that the game of pitch halfpenny has flourished in this place for ages. In many an old Essex inn tap-room the collection of old-world games yet preserved is not a little interesting. I once saw five different kinds in one small room, viz., Shovel Board, Ring the Bull, Pitch Halfpenny, Nine Men's Morris, and a species of miniature skittles played with discs of lead. My illustration will give some idea of this singularly quaint spot. Higher up on the same side of this interesting village street stand three old houses side by side, two of which possess handsomely-carved beams, dated respectively 1590 and 1667. The brackets beneath are very heavy, but of ordinary design. Upon the face of the plaster relics of a running pattern and also panes (alas! much damaged) of elaborate parge-work are to be seen. A few doors



CORNER-POST,
BOCKING.

from these houses a single gable of most delicate parge-work attracts notice, and it is curious to remark that the self-same border pattern is to be found upon a pair of cottages at the next village, Rayne.

Upon the main body of a house (*vide* vignette, p. 50) at Bocking are traces of more ornamental parge-work, which has been ruined by



the insertion of a small window and a door. A portion of a large floral and conventional design remains, above which stands a headless stag. The rest of this street has been modernized to such a degree as to have lost all traces of antiquity, with the exception of one portion of a house upon the opposite side of the road. This house has however suffered by the addition of a huge

gable decorated (?) with modern parge-work of the most ghastly description.

The turning into Braintree is now reached in a few minutes, and at the old-fashioned White Hart Hotel I will tarry to sketch from the bottom of its long stable yard the range of gables seen beneath



its open archway. The town of Braintree itself contains nothing that is sketchable, though evidences enough remain in the altered fronts of its houses to show that it once must have been a most picturesque place. The streets for the most part are narrow and irregular, turning and winding not a little. In recent, or comparatively recent

times, the place became notorious for a dispute known as the Braintree Church case, but this being modern history I will not enter thereon. "Let sleeping dogs lie" in matters controversial is a good maxim. In common with many other Essex towns, Braintree was formerly a seat of the woollen cloth manufacture, and the same causes which ruined that trade elsewhere operated in Braintree to the extinction of the industry. Silk crêpe is now, however, manufactured in Bocking and Braintree.

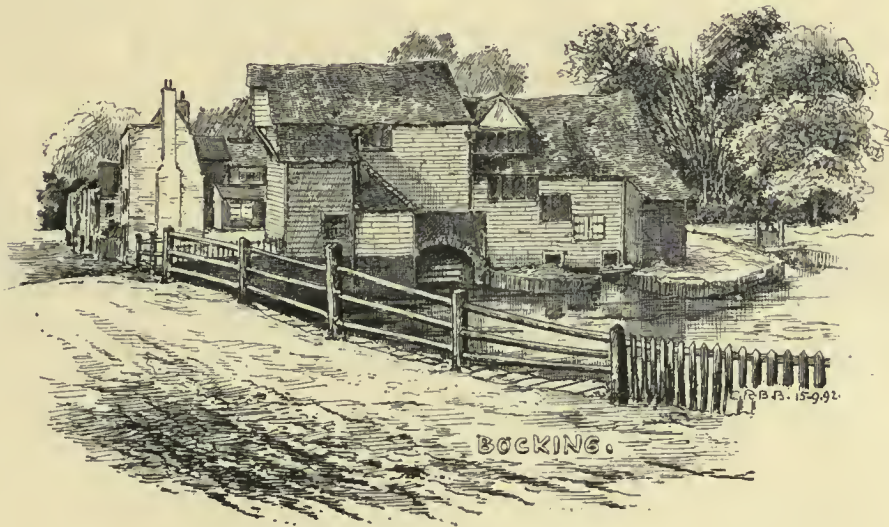
The entries regarding Braintree and Bocking in the State Papers are very numerous, and I shall therefore be compelled to give merely a selection. In October, 1625, we read that the Justices of Essex write to the Council upon a very important subject, stating that the country is much grieved at the great sums of money levied for the maintenance of the forces at Harwich, and is apprehensive of the danger of this new precedent, many well remembering that they received pay from Queen Elizabeth in 1588, 1596 and 1599; they therefore pray that order may be given for their reimbursement. Dated 1628, there exists a Minute, by Nicholas the Secretary, of an Order to be moved for in Council that the soldiers should be continued at Maldon for the reasons expressed in the petition of February 7th, but that the companies billeted at Billericay and Horndon should be removed to Chelmsford and Braintree towns which, with others in that county, not only refuse to pay the charge of billeting, but have been very obstinate in the loans. The continuance of the company of soldiers at Maldon, it may be observed, led to the riot there on St. Patrick's Day, 1628, when many were killed and Captain Cary dangerously wounded. On

April 17th, 1629, on the opening of the Quarter-Sessions at Chelmsford, a deputation of 200 persons, weavers from Bocking and Braintree, presented themselves to the justices complaining of want of work among the clothiers, and stating that 30,000 were likely to be affected thereby. Some of the justices went to treat with the clothiers of those towns, and persuaded the people who were collected together to disperse to their homes. The justices, however, seem to have thought that this state of quiet was not likely to last, and beg the Lords to determine what is to be done in the presence of such great and real distress. In 1629 an ecclesiastical difficulty occurs, which may be mentioned now, seeing that the most interesting documents concerning it were written from Braintree by Samuel Collins, the then vicar. It was the case of Thomas Hooker, the Chelmsford lecturer, an ardent Puritan. At his post he was especially popular among the younger ministers, "to whom he was an oracle and their principal library," and this of course rendered him obnoxious to Laud, who threatened him with the Court of High Commission. Hooker offered to depart quietly from the diocese, but was summoned to appear before the bishop in London, and obeyed in June, 1629. The excitement was intense, and "even drowned the noise of the great question of tonnage and poundage." Samuel Collins mediated and obtained a stay of the proceedings. In his letters to Dr. Duck he points out that there is a clamour "against my Lord of London, as a man endeavouring to suppress good preaching and advance popery." He states that the stoppage of trade has bred much distraction in that country, and "the jealousies of the tumultuous vulgar will be increased by a

vigorous proceeding against him"; and that if suspended Hooker will not leave Essex, being promised "maintenance for the fruition of his private conference" by his followers. Hooker's genius, he says, will still haunt all the pulpits. But, he adds, if a successor needs must be found, "they must have a man who will draw tumults and troops of the country to their inns and shops." Forty-nine of the clergy of Essex petitioned Laud in favour of Hooker, who had withdrawn from Chelmsford, and opened a school at Little Baddow. He was, however, cited to appear in 1630 before the High Commission, but fled to Holland. Three years later he sailed for New England, where he speedily made his mark. Hooker died in 1647, of an epidemic, at Connecticut.

The clothing troubles still continued, and in 1629 we find the weavers with a genuine grievance, which induces Robert, Earl of Warwick, to address the Council. It appears that the clothiers compelled the weavers to make their cloths longer than they were wont to do, but without increase of wages. The Earl suggests that either by proclamation or by means of a letter to the justices of the peace, all baize should be made of one length. This, he adds, would be a means of settling peace among the people. In 1631 Dr. Samuel Collins, the vicar, again appears on the scene. He has managed to fall into the bad books of Laud, and is deeply grieved thereby. Collins seems to have been rather lax in the matter of conformity, but he urges the state of the parish as his excuse, mentioning "his endeavours to reform the error of sundry in his town, who would not be persuaded, but that it shall lay in him to procure them a toleration of their wonted inconformity." He adds

that "it is no easy matter to reduce a numerous congregation into order that has been disorderly these fifty years," and that has for the last seven been encouraged by all the refractory ministers in the country, both by books and words. Had he "suddenly fallen upon the strict practice of conformity he had undone himself and broken the town in pieces." Finally he deprecates any appeal to the High Commission, and submits himself to the censure of his bishop. It is



interesting to note that the next document is a certificate from the churchwardens, John Debnam and Samuel Smyth, to the effect that "their minister, Samuel Collins, has conformed himself to the orders of the Church of England." Both these documents bear the indorsement of Bishop Laud. In 1639 Sir Benjamin Ayloffé writes to Secretary Windebank to the effect that two messengers of the Secretary, having a warrant to be furnished with post-horses for "their

speedy repair to his Majesty," came to Chelmsford, which was much out of their way, the King being in the North. The postmaster refused to supply them, whereupon the men, whose names were Edward Pascall and Robert Welch, proceeded to help themselves to the horses of passers-by, Sir Robert's servant being one of the victims. The men then rode to Cavendish, in Suffolk, and there stopped, and the worthy knight being indignant asks for redress, which he does not appear to have been able to obtain.



In July, 1640, we find the parson of Bocking, Dr. Barkham, giving fifty shillings and a barrel of beer to Captain Rolleston's company of soldiers, then billeted at Braintree. The soldiers got drunk, went to Bocking Church and pulled up the Communion rails, which they then proceeded to burn before their Captain's lodging. The ringleaders were sent to the Chelmsford Gaol. This document, which was sent by the Earl of Warwick to Lee Vane, concludes with a curious passage, "I find the soldiers very jealous in point of their religion, they having often moved me that their officers

might receive the Communion with them." In a long "News Letter" from Edmund Rossingham to Lord Conway, dated July 27, we further find that after rioting at Braintree some of the same company commenced operations at Radwinter Church, where they took away the statue of our Saviour with some cherubims and seraphims, and carried them to Maldon where they burnt them. The writer stigmatises the soldiers as "all as profane as any sons of Belial." Later on, towards the end of August, we find Captain Rolleston discovering a "scandalous book published among his soldiers there." He received information as to where a copy would be found concealed beneath a certain gravestone in Braintree Churchyard. The title of the book, or printed sheet, was "Information from the Scottish nation to all true English concerning the present Expedition." An investigation followed, and one witness, John Fryer, a carpenter, deposed that Edward Cole, junior, of Barfold, co. Suffolk, came to him in the White Hart Inn, in Bocking, Essex, where this examinant was billeted, and told him, in Braintree Churchyard, about the books, finally telling him where to find one. One other document may be quoted. It is dated July 31, 1655, and consists of the petition of Sam. Blakesly, of Braintree, Essex, to the Protector. It seems that one Thomas Wilson, Collector for the Army Assessments in Stisted, 1652, being sickly, employed Blakesly as his deputy to go with some of Com.-Gen. Whalley's troopers to make distresses; and they gave him two pewter flagons distrained from Henry Austin, of Stisted, for 4s. tax. When the troopers had gone to Scotland and were safely out of reach, Austin prosecuted Blakesly. Wilson would

not indemnify Blakesly, and the unfortunate deputy was unable to prove that the flagons were for the State's use; his witnesses being in Scotland. He appears to have spent £30 in law expenses, and fears that unless protected from Austin he will be cast into prison. Between April 22, 1666, and June, 1667, Holman states that 472 persons died of the plague in Bocking—a startling mortality.

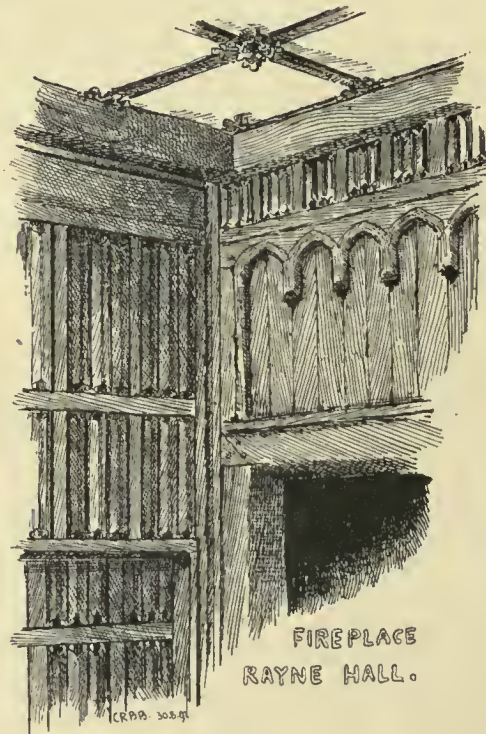
CHAPTER IV.

RAYNE AND LEIGHS.



RAYNE, a quiet, picturesque little village standing upon the old Roman road known as Stane Street, is distant from Braintree about two miles, in the direction of Dunmow. It seems hard to believe that the members of the family who for upwards of four centuries have been lords of the manor obtained no less than three distinct peerages within the space of half a century (1641 to 1691). Such however is the fact, and students of history will easily understand the interest with which I paid a visit to what is left of the ancient residence of the Capells, Earls of Essex. The old manor-house, now reduced to the dimensions of a farm, stands quite close to the church, being separated from the churchyard only by a wall, which is pierced by an old Tudor brick arch, formerly used as the private entrance for the family of the great house. A first glance at the old manor-house creates a feeling of disappointment, as the evidences of partial demolition are patent. The remains of the wall of one wing closely adjoin the present main building, and an arched recess in this wall is strongly

suggestive of a once huge fireplace. The interior, much despoiled though it be, is by no means devoid of interest. A door beneath a modern porch admitted me into a fair-sized hall, well panelled, and containing in one corner a curious large fireplace, the arcade above which is certainly uncommon. This fireplace originally, no



FIREPLACE
RAYNE HALL.

doubt, occupied the centre of the hall, and its present position is due to the insertion of a partition in modern times. The partition however is composed of old linen pattern panels. Upon the right of the fireplace is a flat arched doorway, the spandrels of which are carved with a double-ringed anchor and three cross crosslets

fitchée. This double-ringed anchor I take to be a family badge, as I find no record of it in the family heraldic charges. The door here is also finely linen panelled, and bears the quaint hammered iron handle which gave me the subject for my initial letter. The roof of the hall is somewhat composite and bears signs of having been renovated; the carved bosses however are good and worth study. Another archway on the staircase is similarly carved, with this difference, that a rose occurs with the anchor. It is worth while noticing that in the brick panels at the base of the church tower this anchor is also to be met, together with the arms of the Capells. Otherwise, with the exception of a tiny worm-eaten and weather-worn scutcheon now surmounting the entrance door, there is no heraldry at Rayne Hall. I give a small sketch of this scutcheon, of which the blazon is: Gules, a lion rampant, between three cross crosslets fitchée, or. It is stated that there was formerly much ornamental heraldic glass decorating the windows both of the staircase and the large upper room, but this has now been removed, and it is to be hoped that it has been preserved at Cashio-bury. This glass in one case bore the date 1553, and would probably therefore represent the arms of the then owner, Sir Giles Capell; who, by the way, is credited with having greatly enlarged the house. Elsewhere the arms (of a later date) appeared duly quartered (fifteen coats), surmounted by a coronet and surrounded by a garter. Prior to my visit I had been led to believe that the manor-house as now existing was a compound of two or more houses; that is to say, that portions of the more ancient dwelling

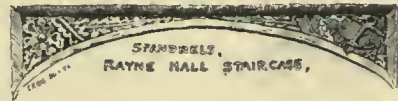


inhabited by the Welles family would be discoverable. I am however bound to add that I failed to identify any portions, and can but come to the conclusion that the whole of the older house has vanished, and that nothing but the Capell mansion (much reduced) at present stands. It should be here stated that from the reign of Henry II. to that of Henry III. Rayne Manor belonged to the Welles family. For about thirty years there was then a break, though the cause thereof is now unknown. Rayne then reverted to its old owners, and remained with them till the male line became extinct. By marriage with the heiress, Joan Welles, it then passed to William de Rushbrook, whose only daughter (Eleanor) married one John Pyke. Eleanor Pyke survived until 1471, and was succeeded by her great-grandson Henry l'Estrange, who sold the manor to a certain Richard Turvant. Turvant in turn sold it to Sir William Capell, the ancestor of the present Earls of Essex. The Capells were originally a Suffolk family of gentle blood, and had been for generations settled at Stoke-by-Nayland. About the middle of the fifteenth century the head of the family died, leaving three sons and a daughter; the eldest son succeeded to the Suffolk estates, the second, William, went up to London to make his way in the world—and succeeded so well that Barclay, the poet, refers specially to his immense wealth. William Capell was knighted by Henry VII.

Now the possession of wealth in that reign was apt to cause inconvenience to the possessor, and we are not surprised to find that Sir William fell into the clutches of that notorious pair of

plunderers, Empsom and Dudley. A demand was made for £1,600, and this was complied with, though doubtless with by no means a good grace. A further demand for £2,000 upon some frivolous charge of misconduct was refused, and Sir William was sent to the Tower, where he remained till the death of Henry VII. The chief events in the life of Sir William Capell are as follows:—He was Sheriff of London in 1489, M.P. for the City in 1491, Lord Mayor in 1503, member for the City again in the years 1512 and 1514. He died in 1515, and from the Visitation of 1612 we learn that “he lyeth buried in a stately Chapple by him bilte in St. Bartholomews Church by ye

Exchange.” That his opposition to the unjust demands of Henry VII. was due to sturdy self-respect and not to meanness is sufficiently proved by the fact that he voluntarily destroyed bonds for



a large amount due to him by Henry VIII. This is a fact; but the story of his pledging that monarch in a cup containing a dissolved pearl of great value is probably apocryphal, nor would a tale of such foolish ostentation redound to the credit of the fine old merchant prince were it true—except perhaps on the score of far-fetched loyalty.

It is interesting to note that in the Paston Letters (No. 889) approximately of the date 1486, mention is made by Alice, Lady Fitzhugh, of a large sum which she has just “payd according to promise to Sir William Cabell.” Sir William was succeeded by his

son Giles, a man high in favour with Henry VIII., and distinguished in war and martial exercises. Of him it is related that he was knighted for his valour at the battle of Théroutanne. To Sir Giles succeeded his son Sir Henry, who died childless, leaving his estates to his half-brother Edward. Edward Capell was knighted in 1587, and died the following year, leaving ten children—six sons and four daughters. His eldest son Arthur, also a knight, succeeded him, and he in course of time was succeeded by his grandson of the same name. Arthur Capell, the plain “Mr. Capell, Member for Herts,” of Carlyle, but better known as Arthur, Lord Capell of Hadham, is one of the striking figures of the English history of troublous times. Born about 1610, he first comes into notice in 1639, when he was elected a Member for Herts. At the election in 1640 Capell was again returned, and thus took his seat in the Long Parliament. An honest politician, he was in the forefront of the legislative battle which was waged to obtain redress for obvious oppression, but he was too loyal a subject, and too good an Englishman, to side long with those who desired the total disruption of the existing constitution of the kingdom. Capell became a royalist to the backbone, but an honest royalist. Ready, as many another, to sacrifice his worldly goods and his life for his king, he yet could sturdily refuse to sanction or further schemes which in his judgment were detrimental to the cause. His reward was a peerage, to which he was raised in August, 1641, by the title of Lord Capell of Hadham. It must be added that he was in the main responsible for the renewal of the Civil War in 1648—an attempt which included the disastrous raid in Essex, and culminated there in the military murders of the gallant

Lucas and Lisle after Colchester had surrendered. Poor Capell himself did not fail to pay the penalty. Taken prisoner at Colchester, he was sent first to Windsor, and afterwards to the Tower. Thence he managed to escape, but was betrayed and again captured. On Thursday, March 8, 1648-9, "in a thin house, hardly above sixty there," the vote was passed which condemned him to death. He was executed on the following day; he died as he had lived, a brave man and a gentleman. Above his grave in Hadham Church is an inscription which recalls the melancholy slab in that dismal Colchester church where the bodies of Lisle and Lucas lie. It states that he "was murdered for his loyalty to King Charles the First, March 9, 1648." Clarendon's fine tribute to his memory must not be omitted:—"He was a man that whoever shall after him deserve best of the English nation, he can never think himself undervalued when he shall hear that his courage, virtue, and fidelity are laid in the balance with, and compared to, that of the Lord Capell." He was succeeded in the estates, and the diminished family wealth, by his eldest son, also named Arthur. Arthur, the second Lord Capell of Hadham, was born in 1631. It is stated that his early education was neglected by reason of the Civil Wars. If this be true, he must subsequently have made up leeway, for his papers point to no want of knowledge. Evelyn, the diarist, appears to have had a very high opinion of him. As a boy of twelve or thirteen he is heard of fighting for the king at Shrewsbury. When the king obtained his own again, Capell was made Viscount Malden and Earl of Essex. He was Lord Lieutenant of both Herts and Wilts, and appears to have occupied himself with county matters till 1670, when he was sent as Amba-

sador to Denmark. It will be remembered that on this occasion he successfully maintained his refusal to strike the British flag to a Danish fort in passing. His next important office was that of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in succession to Ormonde. Here he gained golden opinions for the integrity and ability of his government. Hotbed of corruption though Ireland was, Lord Essex left it after five years in a position to say that his secretary, by name Allworth, was the only man "not that he had gratified, but that he requested might be gratified by his successor." Throughout his administration he was constantly occupied in opposing corruption, in fighting tooth and nail the greedy horde of adventurers who either sought posts from him or brought improper grants to him for satisfaction. He came to Ireland a poor man, and left it as poor. Upon his return to England he became mixed up with the many home court intrigues connected with the Exclusion Bill; and his personal share in matters political becomes not a little involved. When the Exclusion Bill was lost, Essex seems to have somewhat modified his views, and to have adopted, with Halifax, the idea that some expedient or legally guarded compromise might be adopted to insure Protestantism. Then came the era of plots, some real, but in most cases fictitious; and Essex, upon the testimony of Lord Howard of Escrick (Dryden's Nadab) found himself a prisoner in the Tower. The trial of Russell came on, with what result we all know; and on the first day of that memorable judicial farce word went round the crowded court that Essex was dead. Popular opinion for long held that he was the victim of some emissary of James, Duke of York; but it is more probable that in a fit of melancholy this great man committed suicide.

Arthur, Viscount Malden, and Earl of Essex, had a younger brother Henry, who was also a man of mark. He was created K.C.B. at the Coronation of Charles II. Subsequently he became First Commissioner of the Admiralty Board. Sir Henry Capell was a strong supporter of the Exclusion Bill. Early in the reign of William III. he was appointed a Lord of the Treasury, a post which he held till 1690, and afterwards resumed in 1691-2, when he was created Lord Capell of Tewkesbury. In 1693, on the recall of Lord Sydney, the Lord Deputy of Ireland, Lord Capell was appointed one of the three Lords Justices. In Ireland, like his brother Lord Essex, he gained considerable renown, and to his exertions the passing of the great Act of Settlement was not a little due. Lord Capell of Tewkesbury died at Dublin in 1696; as he left no issue the title became extinct.¹

Rayne Church, which is dedicated to All Saints, has been entirely rebuilt with the exception of the tower. The original nave and chancel and south chapel were late Norman, and are stated to have been in existence till 1840 from the days of Henry II. Thanks to the courtesy of the occupier of Rayne Hall I was enabled to take a sketch of the quaint old brick tower with its curious stair turret cap from one of the Hall windows—a point from which the tower can be seen at its best. Within the church there is a fine heraldic brass upon the south wall of the chancel. The several shields

¹ In the foregoing notes on the Capell family I have adopted the form of spelling, *i.e.* with the double l, which is now, since 1880, the correct method. It is a return to the original way in which the name was written at the time when the branch of the Capells of Suffolk first settled in the neighbouring county of Essex.

of the Capells with their many quarterings thereon are most interesting and most complete. Rayne Church in former days



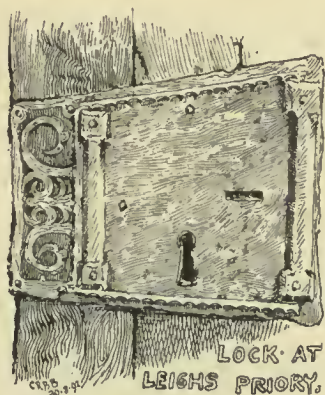
had a renown of its own, for it possessed an altar in the chapel of the south aisle at which the prayers said were specially beneficial to women with child. The altar was dedicated to

the Blessed Virgin, and the belief in its efficacy dated back as far as the reign of Edward III., when the image smiled, or is said to have smiled, on the attendants of the wife of John de Naylinghurst. The poor lady was at the point of death, but had passed successfully through her trial ere her maids returned, joyful because, as they said, "Our Lady of Mercy smiled upon us." An Essex proverbial saying runs thus: "Go ere long and say your prayers at Rayne!"

Leighs Priory is situated in the parish of Little Leighs, about three miles from Rayne, and close to the border of Felstead. There are variations in the style of spelling adopted for this place, and in ancient documents Leez, Lees, or Lyes is more often to be found than the modern Leighs. The parish is a small one, and its church is a building of no great size. It is dedicated to St. John, and is mainly remarkable for an oaken life-size effigy of a priest which lies in the chancel beneath an arched canopy. This effigy is, as far as is known, the only existing wooden effigy of an ecclesiastic. Otherwise, with the exception of a few specimens of linen pattern decorated bench ends there is nothing in the church of Little Leighs to attract attention. As first seen when approached from Rayne the scanty relics of Leighs Priory are singularly beautiful. I say scanty, because of the ecclesiastical portion of the building but little is left. Of the mansion of the Rich family, which was erected after the suppression, considerable fragments remain. Upon the subject of the present condition of these buildings I shall have more to say hereafter. Not easily can the field path to the priory be discovered unless one is tolerably well acquainted

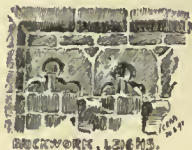
with the district. It winds and turns, here passing by a brook and over a wooden bridge, next leading through a farm-yard (apparently a private way), and finally turning one loose again on the high road, where a sign-post of an ambiguous nature adds to one's perplexity. After a while, however, the turrets and roofs of the deserted and desolate old mansion peep up among the trees; here a turret shows itself, there perhaps a gable, so covered with ivy as to be almost unrecognisable. The road turns off, or rather a gateway leads to the left, towards the wreck of this fine old place immediately after passing an old-world stew—a relic of the fish-eating Wednesdays and Fridays of ecclesiastical times. This old pond is very beautiful in the bright late summer sun, with its sides overgrown with many a tree and bush, trailing creepers dipping their points and loops into the flat green leaves of the water lilies which cover, or nearly cover, the surface of the pool. A favourite haunt it is for coots and moorhens, and one would imagine it to be a likely place for pike. Behind the pond or stew runs a stretch of the abbey wall, beyond which buildings, or the remains of buildings, are visible, and, high above them, the noble turreted gatehouse, once the glory of Leighs. On the right are more buildings and a farm-yard—for alas! all that is left habitable of this grand old place is converted into a farmhouse. This farmhouse occupies the left wing and gateway of the porter's lodge, and contains little of interest except some of the inevitable linen pattern panelling. The right wing of this gateway is in ruin; its roof has for the most part fallen in *en masse*; the floors (such as are

left) are in a condition that beggars description; and, as if in mockery, above this gateway is still preserved the stone 'scutcheon, perfect save that it lacks a crest and the sinister supporter (which should have been a stag). The gate beneath is massive, and still retains its fine old lock of pierced steel plate. This lock, which well deserves inspection, I sketched.

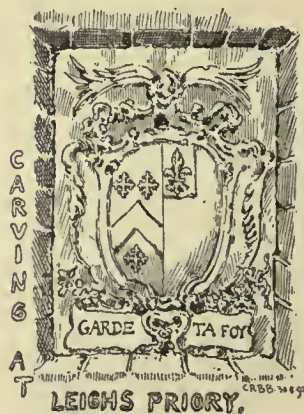


Originally, when in all its splendour, Leighs Priory consisted of two immense quadrangular courts; and it is the ruinous gatehouse or gateway of the second court which is really the gem of the place now. It is built of brick, and flanked by octagonal crenellated turrets at each corner. Above the fine gateway arches, one of which is bricked up to convert the space into a cow-shed or stable, are the relics of two fine rooms with large mullioned windows. The old gates, with grand though mutilated carved panels, yet hang on their huge rusty hinges, and may even yet be barred by their original and mighty iron revolving bar. Each gate, which is latticed at the back (as are

the postern gates in the Tower of London), is pierced by a tiny wicket of a size just sufficient to permit the entrance or exit of one person. Externally the effect of the fine brickwork is excellent, narrow plinths run up the faces of the front of the turrets, and terminate at intervals in beautiful ornamental



bands of brickwork. Of this brickwork I took a sketch in order that it might be compared with some other specimens of a like nature. It is curious to note that though the main design of these ornamental bands is the same, the method of carrying out the idea in absolute brickwork is essentially different in all cases. Comparison of my sketches will explain my meaning. Above this gateway, of which the stone spandrels are curiously carved with fleur-de-lys and rose, is a 'scutcheon bearing the arms of Rich and the motto "Garde ta foy." Old Rich, the original founder of the greatness of the family, carried out this principle, but only in part—he remained till his death a stanch Catholic, but he was equally a most industrious church robber. Here and there on the faces of the turrets the plainness of the surface is diversified by that favourite diamond pattern in black brick, and what a good effect time-mellowed work of this kind ever has! High aloft there yet remain on two contiguous faces the bent and rusted gnomons of a pair of sundials. The main building of this gatehouse is composed of two



floors, which are approached by means of an oak newel in one of the turrets. Their floors are not safe now, nor indeed is the oak newel in such a condition as to warrant its being much used; for its huge and heavy steps—solid blocks of oak—are being detached by the mischievous, and some of them have even been hurled through the windows to the ground beneath. In the



large windows of the first floor chamber one mullion has been knocked out (the central one), and in the window immediately above it a side mullion has shared a like fate. The roof is but a roof in name, and soon the entire building may be expected to become an absolute shell. Close beneath the tower nestle the remains of a curious little stone fountain which rests upon a brick foundation. Its basin has long ago departed, but it would

hardly be credited that the demon of mischief has possessed somebody to endeavour to undermine this pretty little structure by kicking out or knocking away its brick foundation. On the occasion of my visit I counted no fewer than eleven broken bricks which had been forcibly removed, and the fragments of which were littering the grass. Upon this side of the tower the marks in the wall show where the joists of the destroyed portion formerly ran, and there is also at the base a series of three curious shallow arched recesses the exact use and intention of which is not easily to be determined.

One other feature calls for remark—viz. the fine series of four ornamental chimneys, which yet remain upright and in perfect condition to testify to the excellence of the Tudor brickwork. Now it may be asked whether anybody is responsible for the present condition of Leighs, and the reply is a simple one. Leighs Priory, then a magnificent mansion, was sold to the guardians or governors of Guy's Hospital. Immediately on coming into possession of this noble place these worthies pulled down all but the gatehouse and sixteenth century porter's lodge, converting the latter into a farmhouse. The gatehouse was left to fall into ruin, and, if something is not soon done to arrest decay and repair the ravages of time and the work of mischievous or ignorant visitors, that ruin will be complete. It is highly discreditable to such a body to permit interesting architectural remains of which they may have become possessed to fall into such a disgraceful state.

The history of the manor and priory of Leighs is as follows :—
About the year 1230 Sir Ralph Gernon, Knight, to whom the

manor belonged, founded at Leighs a priory for Augustinian Canons and dedicated it to the Blessed Virgin and St. John the Evangelist. The priory throve, though it never became inordinately wealthy, and we read that at the time of the suppression its revenues amounted to £114 os. 4*d.* At this date a direct descendant in the female line of the founder yet retained the advowson and patronage of the priory. The Gernons, a very ancient Essex



family, have long been extinct in the county ; the name, however, is represented in co. Meath, and it would be interesting to discover whether the Irish family is in any way connected with the English. By marriage there was hardly a family of importance in Essex that was not allied to the Gernons or their descendants. It is curious to note how the county families of Essex intermarried in ancient days ; the merest glance at the pedigrees will

reveal this, even if the heraldic devices on the tombs have not already assured one of the fact.

When the suppression of monasteries came, Leighs with other manors fell as spoil to Sir Richard Rich, Chancellor, since 1535, of that iniquitous body styled the Court of Augmentation. Sir Richard had his ambitions, and to possess a fine country seat was perhaps, next to his personal aggrandisement, the chief of them. He set to work to build a palace on to the more modest domestic buildings of the priory. The priory church had gone of course; in this instance not even its site has been handed down, so completely did the iconoclasts perform their task. The palace arose from the ruins of the priory, with its two court-yards, its banqueting-hall, and its noble gatehouse, surrounding which were beautiful and extensive gardens and pleasaunces. Leighs was added to by other members of the Rich family, till its elegance was known far and wide throughout the county—nay more, throughout England. Leighs continued in the Rich family from the time of the suppression until 1673, when it was bequeathed by Charles Rich, the fifth Earl of Warwick, to Robert Montague, Earl of Manchester, his nephew; the title of Earl of Warwick going without estates to a kinsman. The Montagues retained possession till about 1720, when their representative, William, Duke of Manchester (second of the new creation), sold the land and house to the trustees of the young Duke of Buckinghamshire. He died unmarried in 1735, and was succeeded by his half-brother, by whom the priory was sold to Guy's Hospital. As most of our readers are aware, it was at Leighs that the Princess Elizabeth passed a

portion of her time in captivity during the reign of her sister Mary.

One or two extracts from the State papers referring to Leighs are amusing and may well be given. Richard Rich, who was raised to the peerage in 1547 as Lord Rich of Leez, and became Lord Chancellor in the same year, writes to Cecil in September, 1549, directing that Essex and Nicholas More, two prisoners, should be sent to Brentwood for trial, and he also asks to know where each should be executed! An upright judge this! but his conduct at the trial of Sir Thomas More had already stamped him with ignominy. Dated from Leighs on July 24, 1550, we find an attested copy of Letters Patent granted by Edward VI. for promoting a Dutch Church in London, for the pure interpretation of the Scriptures and administration of the Holy Sacrament. Fifteen years later we find Lord Rich forwarding to Queen Elizabeth a curious pedigree which one of his servants had obtained at Braintree, "the intention of which he does not comprehend." This pedigree traced the descent of Mary Queen of Scots from Richard Plantagenet, and placed her in close proximity to the Crown of England. The first Lord Rich died in 1568. His grandson, the third Lord Rich, who is remembered as the first husband of Sir Philip Sidney's "Stella," Lady Penelope Devereux, was advanced to the Earldom of Warwick in 1618. Henry, his second son, was raised to the Earldom of Holland in 1624. In later days the titles of Holland and Warwick were united and the joint peerage only became extinct on the death of the fifth Earl of Holland and eighth Earl of Warwick in 1759. It was the only son of Robert, third Earl of Warwick, who married

in 1657, Frances, the youngest daughter of Oliver Cromwell, the Protector. The narrative of the wedding feast, at which the behaviour of the great Oliver was not a little curious, furnishes most amusing reading. Briefly, the grave and sober-minded Oliver Cromwell so far relaxed his sterner moods as to be guilty of smearing the hair and costumes of the ladies present at the wedding-feast with sweetmeats and confectionery.

I must now retrace my steps to my hostelry, the White Hart, at Braintree, preparatory to a visit to Gosfield.

When I planned this book I had hoped to devote a fully illustrated chapter to Gosfield Hall, with its grand long gallery (which was closed against me) and its quaint quadrangle. The park, with its large expanse of water near the house, was a tempting subject for the pencil. Permission to sketch was of course required; but I had reason to believe that here, as elsewhere, my application would be favourably received. It was not, however, to be: my request was refused on the ground that my sketches were likely to supply information to burglars. Leave to sketch the park and ornamental water was, it is true, granted; but I was stringently forbidden to take any sketches of the interior or exterior of the house. Under these circumstances I cannot do otherwise than omit Gosfield Hall altogether, beyond a passing mention. Photographs and engravings exist which I might have used for purposes of description; but it has been my invariable rule to sketch everything at first hand. So much in explanation of what may appear to be an important omission.



GOSFIELD, a pretty village, stands high on the hills about three miles from the busy little town of Halstead and six miles from Braintree. Historical itself, it lies in a historic district, being bounded on three sides by the Hedinghams, Bocking, and Wethersfield. I have elsewhere noticed how by intermarriage the various owners of manors in these parishes were at different times connected. Hawkwood, de Codham, Wentworth, Doreward, and many another old Essex name have often been mentioned. Here we find another family, that of Rolfe. Thomas Rolfe, who married twice, had for his second wife Anne Hawkwood; and from the corbels on the chancel arch of Gosfield Church I must conclude that he was much concerned in its building. One of these corbels bears the arms of Hawkwood; on the other is one of the heraldic Cornish choughs of Rolfe. It is strange that upon this shield (*vide* initial) there should be only one chough, and that one looking towards the sinister side of the shield. The arms of Rolfe are:—Argent, three Cornish choughs sable.

Gosfield Church, a somewhat quaint building, presents both internally and externally one or two noteworthy features. In the first place the east window is not now in the centre of the chancel wall; and it would appear that the south side wall has been rebuilt about four feet from its original position in order to make room for the Rolfe tomb, which yet remains there. This tomb bears a brass of

date 1440. Thomas Rolfe was a serjeant-at-law, and founded a charity in Gosfield Church, where a priest was to perform service and also to assist in the ordinary parochial services. This worthy old lawyer also bequeathed money to be given in charity to lepers and to dower virgins. More than a century after the death of Thomas Rolfe his descendant John, who still owned the lands, repaired this chantry chapel. In the wall of the south side, near the chancel arch, a curious piscina is to be found ;



the label (now destroyed) was terminated by two heads, male and female, one of which appears to be in its original position, while the other has seemingly been inserted. Above the crown of the arch an incised and decorated trefoil ornament has been carved, possibly when

the label was removed. The extraordinary arrangement of the pew in the Wentworth Chapel must needs attract attention. The opening of this pew for all the world resembles a box at a theatre ; the more so because in order to construct a vault beneath, the pew floor is raised some five feet above the level of the rest of the church. A huge marble monument to the Knight family (1732) covers the north wall of the chapel. The elegiac inscription on this tomb beginning—

“O ! fairest pattern to a falling age,” &c.

is interesting from the fact that it has always been ascribed to Pope. An inscription is alluded to by him in one of his letters to Mrs. Knight, dated May 17th, 1736, in which he writes,

"Though I forget all the town at this season, I would not have you think I forget your commissions; but (to put it on a truer foot) I can't forget a person I so really loved and esteemed as the subject of the enclosed inscription. It is now as I think it ought to be, and the sooner it is engraved the better." This lady was the sister of Secretary Craggs, and was married first to John Newsham, a Warwickshire gentleman, who died in 1724. Her second husband was John Knight, M.P. for St. Germain's and Sudbury, who died in 1733. Mrs. Knight married thirdly Robert Nugent, created Baron Nugent and Viscount Clare, afterwards Earl Nugent. He died 1788, and was buried at Gosfield, surviving his wife thirty-three years.

The outside of Gosfield Church is only remarkable for the square-headed windows of this north chapel. It should, however, be noted that upon the north-east buttress appears a Vere mullet in coloured plaster: the origin of this ornamentation is quite unaccountable. Viewed from opposite the vicarage gates, this little church, flanked on the one hand by the trees of the park and on the other by a group of pines, is by no means an unpicturesque object. Here I may be permitted to offer my thanks to the Vicar, the Rev. H. L. Elliot, for much kind courtesy on the occasion of my visit to his church.

In the village of Gosfield itself there is not much to interest, though the place is pleasant to the eye. One old timber-built gable-ended house, which I was informed was called "Old Gosfield Hall," though better known as "Twisted Chimney," was worth sketching, if only for its chimney. This last bears a sundial, but

is specially remarkable for being an addition to the house, which is shown by the presence of an archway in it, containing a window on the ground floor, and the fact that the only fireplace communicating with it is on the first floor. Another tumbledown range of irregular gables, belonging to a dwelling known as Highgates (or Higattes), gave me a sketch. It would appear that



this old house was formerly the dwelling in Gosfield of the sisters of St. Clare.

Turning away from Gosfield I take to the fields, and, passing through beautifully timbered country, have many a lovely glimpse by the way. At one time a long, grassy, timber-fringed combe

or chase stretches down the hill. One can envy the owner of a large house that just shows its chimneys and upper windows among the trees on the hill at the other side of the valley. Soon, however, Halstead comes in sight, and I descend the hill past the new church, pausing only near the station to examine the fine old oak beams at the Bull Inn, and make my way up the long steep street to the market-place, notable only for its hideous drinking fountain.



CHAPTER V.

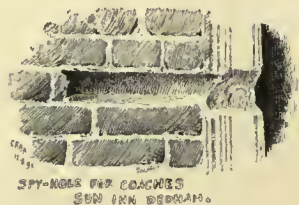
ROUND DEDHAM.



EDHAM is a small and quaint town, which has to-day the sleepy air of a place from which prosperity has departed. It lies in the far-famed Vale of Dedham, about three miles from the town of Manningtree, at least by the high road. There is, however, a shorter and more pleasant path over the fields, and this I determined to take. Passing the weedy and rush-girt pond or reservoir just outside the station at Manningtree, I turned to the left and went beneath the low arched railway bridge into the fields beyond. Doubtless in the winter season these same fields are a perfect swamp, as the land lies low and the river Stour is near; but in the bright sunshine of a late August day there is no need to hesitate before leaving the road. Pollarded willows, which mark the course of the sedgy dykes through the level meadows, rustle their silvery leaves; and here and there clumps of meadowsweet with their creamy blooms, interspersed with the tall, pink-spiked, waving marsh flowers, break the monotony of the brown-topped feathery sedges in the dykes. Plank causeways at places along the path betoken

the spots which are the first to be submerged, and these lead generally to the tiny frail-looking timber bridges which span the dykes. Sometimes the path skirts a hedge gay with the primrose and orange bloom of the wild snapdragon, mingled with vetches of brilliant chrome and various shades of mauve and purple. The bramble trailers, too, are still in blossom; and the dog-rose shoots stand sturdily up, seeming to invite decapitation. By the dykes the scented wild mint is blowing, and everywhere the elegant major white convolvulus clings with tenacity to the stronger plants, and bedecks their stems with its short-lived blooms. Presently, above a hedge, I get a first sight of the grand pinnacled tower of Dedham Church, only to lose the view again while going down a narrow lane, where the monster hedge is so thickly covered with tufts purloined from passing hay-carts as almost to resemble an immensely long rick. At least half a load must have been here lost to the farmer—and these are bad times. Next I pass through a field bright with ripened barley, and in a few minutes more find myself crossing Dedham Bridge at the lower end of Dedham Street. This street, though it can boast of no houses whose exteriors now bear any great marks of antiquity, is nevertheless a good study of colour, in which the bright red brick of the old writing school plays a conspicuous part. Upon the left-hand side stands the present grammar school, and beyond it the church; on the right are two ancient inns, the Marlboro' Head and the Sun. As the Marlboro' Head comes first I will give it the prior notice. Externally there is nothing to admire in the building, but it has

within a curious room in which the beams of the ceiling are extremely well carved. The arrangement of these beams is somewhat peculiar, for they radiate as it were from a transverse beam. My opinion is that this work has been collected from different parts of the old house and fitted in many years ago. One beam in particular is worth notice, for it bears a striking resemblance to those in the house of Thomas Paycocke at Coggeshall. Two carved brackets in the room are also good, but are evident insertions. In one corner is a larder with a leaded glazed door of old date, pierced with a leaden ventilator, which gave me the subject for my initial letter.



Ventilators of this nature are nowadays extremely rare. The Sun Inn, which stands just opposite the church, is a quaint old house, whose long and rambling yard tells a tale of the departed glories of coaching days—and of these coaching days a curious relic still remains in the old tap-room of the Sun. On each side of the wide bay window fronting the street, and within the room, may be seen in the wall a small oval pane of glass, about four inches by three. Through the wall on either side of the windows, so as to command a view both up and down the street, a hole has been cut, but to make this complete it has been needful to groove away the wall, in one case this groove being hewn through the jamb of the door. This quaint arrangement was worth sketching; and indeed, a sketch will make my explanation clearer. From the lower end of the yard the pinnaced tower of the church shows well above



The Sun Inn, Dedham.

the irregular buildings of the inn, in which it is curious to note that from the wide archway, in order to admit large vehicles more easily, the building has been sloped off. On the side of of this yard is a very quaint external staircase, which, however, does not plainly appear (owing to its situation) in the above sketch. It has formed the subject for an etching.

Dedham Church is extremely interesting for many reasons. Its tower is a fine one, and the open porch or galilee at its base



is most remarkable. The arrangement of piers and arches in the nave is very uncommon, and the clerestory windows are by no means unworthy of the building. Porches exist upon both sides of the church, the door of that on the north having suffered sad mutilation as it has been cut through, the canopies and images which once decorated it being flattened, especially in the upper row. The tower is built of flint faced with stone, and stands 131 feet high, the base of it forming the galilee. It is to the decoration and roofing of this galilee that I wish to draw particular attention ; as

the roof is coved, not groined, and the arrangement of the cove



DEDHAM.
CHURCH TOWER.

panels is peculiar while their number is uncommon. My sketch shows one of them, and there are twenty-six in all, that is to say, thirteen east and thirteen west, which meet overhead. Of these panels two at each end are vacant; in the others the rose alternates with the portcullis. Besides these royal badges, which sufficiently indicate the date of the tower, there are several shields of arms, some of which have initials; also the fragment of a crest (lacking its wreath). The crest occurs in the panel which I have sketched, but in the detail drawing I have also added a shield and initials from another panel. Here there is some difficulty. The arms are those of the Naylor or Welbeck family: how, then, can the initials I. R. be explained? The crest belongs to neither family. On the exterior of the tower the flint and dressed stone frieze on the embattled top recalls some of the best Suffolk churches. Near the ground we have some panels bearing a crowned M (the monogram of the Virgin), to whom the church is dedicated, alternating with others which bear shields within decorated quatrefoils. It would,



DEDHAM.



appear that Dedham Church was founded in the reign of Henry VII. by Thomas Webbe and his son John, who were wealthy Dedham clothiers. In the north aisle there is a beautiful tomb, unfortunately somewhat restored, which tradition states to belong to one or both of these worthies. Certain it is that shields bearing the initials of both of them, and surmounting their merchant's mark, are to be found thereon. The tomb, which is a half-canopied one, has, I believe, been moved from some other position to the place which it now occupies.



I have mentioned a peculiarity in the piers of the nave: it is this,—the ogee work at the point of each arch is formed into a pilaster, which on the level of the sill of the clerestory windows is worked into a corbel and then is continued similarly over each of the windows, running down again to the floor of the nave at the piers. Unluckily these corbels have been terribly damaged, in fact destroyed.

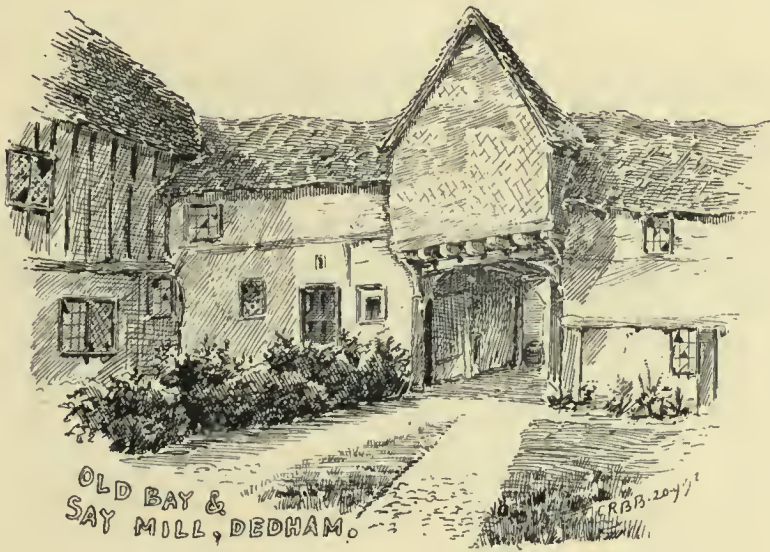
Upon the north side of the chancel is a mural monument with a bust to John Rogers (Roaring Rogers), who died in 1636, after being Vicar of Dedham for thirty-one years. His nickname explains itself, and even to this day the memory of his power of speech has not yet died out. I now come to what has always been somewhat of an antiquarian puzzle, I mean the curious recess in the Sanctuary of Dedham Church upon the south side. This is now used as a credence table, but, as it is provided with a chimney which runs up within an external buttress, has obviously been converted from its original intention. The height of this arched

aperture above the floor precludes the possibility of its having been intended for a fireplace; and the presence of the chimney does away with the notion that it might have been a piscina. There only remains a suggestion that it was possibly an oven intended for baking the sacramental wafers. To this last view I incline, though I am aware that it has many opponents, who among other things will say, "Show us another oven in a chancel if you can."

The free Grammar School of Dedham, now of course carried on under a modern scheme, has certainly existed there since 1571; and there is a record of a gift to a school there by William Cardinall thirty-two years before, by which the rent of a farm in Great Bromley was to be divided between two poor scholars natives of Dedham and Bromley, to enable them to proceed to Cambridge. The endowment of 1571 was that of William Littlebury, Gent., of Dedham, who bequeathed a farm rented at £20 for the maintenance of the schoolmaster, who was to teach in consideration thereof twenty scholars "such as the governors approved of." This points to an already established school. Three years later Queen Elizabeth incorporated the school by charter and gave the establishment her name. The common seal is curious, representing a sour-visaged pedagogue holding a birch in his left hand and seated in a high chair. On either side of him are six boys clad in "blue coat" garb and reading books. One boy, seemingly of higher rank, stands on the master's right and carries either a cup or a hornbook. At the master's feet is a blank scutcheon. One curious proviso in the charter is that the parents of the Dedham boys are com-

manded to supply them with bows, shafts, bracers, and gloves in order to train them in the use of manly weapons.

A short distance on the south side of the town stands a picturesque old bay and say mill, which is now cut up into cottages. I could not refrain from taking a couple of sketches within its time-worn and tumble-down quadrangle. One of these shows the entrance gates, through which in the days of its prosperity no



doubt many a loaded wagon of baize or serge went off to the nearest mart. This end of the building has been plastered over so that the upright timbers (visible upon the other sides) are not to be seen. The brackets of the gateway beams are very massive, and originally this part of the premises must have been constructed with a view to the security of the valuables contained in the mill. My other sketch shows the opposite corner of the quadrangle, where

a porch of respectable antiquity, though an evident insertion, covers one of the older doors : but the whole place is interesting, especially when compared with the gigantic factories of the present day. Not far from this old mill may be seen some very pretty cottages with projecting and overhanging stories, heavily beamed and bracketed ; one has a corner-post, the only corner-post in Dedham.



Though not in the parish of Dedham, there is upon its borders a curious house, which I think I may be allowed to mention. It is known as Box Hall and lies over the hill in the direction of Boxted. As the view *en route* is very fine the walk is well worth taking. Box Hall is an ancient house with the relics of carved

bargeboards and pinnacles on its gables, mullioned windows, and the general characteristics of an old Essex hall ; but the remarkable thing is that the box trees, planted ages ago in the front, have grown till their stems are thicker than the mullions of the windows, which at first sight (so is the box clipped) they appear to form. The density of this evergreen foliage may be guessed when I say that it is five feet in thickness. Altogether Box Hall is a curiosity. The parish of Dedham was divided primarily into three manors, Dedham Hall, Over Hall, and Nether Hall, but the last two were very soon united. Dedham Manor belonged to a Norman family, De Stubville, until the year 1338 when this branch became extinct and the manor lapsed to the Crown. By Edward III. it was granted to Robert de Ufford, Earl of Suffolk, a distinguished soldier and statesman who died in 1369. His son succeeded, and fell dead in the House of Peers in 1381, leaving no children. The manor was Crown property till Henry VIII. granted it to Cromwell Earl of Essex ; and subsequently confiscated it again, settling it upon Anne of Cleves as a part of her jointure. By Charles I. in 1629 the manor was sold. The other two manors belonged to the family of the de Dedhams, one of whom bestowed them on the nunnery of Campesey in Suffolk. It is curious to note that there are several Nether Halls in the county of Essex, the famous one however being in days gone by the home of the Colt family near Roydon. The manor of Dedham Hall is one of the fourteen manors in the county in which the custom of Borough English prevails, i.e. the copyholds descending to a younger son.

But it is not to a native born that Dedham owes what celebrity it has, though its Grammar School can claim him as a pupil ; I mean John Constable, R.A. This great painter, the founder of the school of faithful landscape, was born in 1776, not far from Dedham, at East Bergholt in Suffolk, where his father Golding Constable was a wealthy miller. From a school at Lavenham, where he was most brutally thrashed, young Constable was sent to Dedham Grammar School, where he was judiciously trained and fairly well taught under Dr. Grimwood.

How the natural bent for art declared itself and how obstacles to the study of that art were interposed from a chapter in the lives of most artists, and Constable's life was no exception to the rule. His father first wished to make a parson of him, and then a miller ; but luckily the boy fell in with Sir George Beaumont, who lent him pictures to copy and ultimately persuaded the father to allow his son to study in London (1795). Meanwhile young Constable had been roaming about the fields and studying nature with the village painter, plumber, and glazier, by name Dunthorne, the two friends having clubbed together to hire a room in the village to paint in. (One feels inclined to speculate as to whether Dunthorne from East Bergholt had any hand in the Marlboro' Head leaden ventilator.) In 1799 Constable became a student at the Royal Academy, and three years later exhibited his first picture. Not until 1819 was he elected Associate, and in another decade attained his full membership.

It came however too late, as he himself said : "It has been delayed too long, and I cannot impart it." Even then his work

was not appreciated by the general public, who seemed to think Constable "lucky to be elected." He died suddenly in the night of March 31, 1837. That Dedham and its neighbourhood were favourite subjects for the pencil and brush of Constable lovers of art know full well. "Dedham Vale," and "A View on the Stour, near Dedham," are instances in point; but many other pictures of the district were exhibited, though not exactly concerning Dedham itself. The memoirs of Constable, chiefly composed of his letters, were published by his friend, C. R. Leslie, R.A., and at present give the best picture of the home life and thoughts of the great landscape painter.

It was from Dedham that the iconoclasts Ring, Debnam, Marsh, and Gard sallied forth by night to destroy the famous Holy Rood at Dovercourt near Harwich. The church was open night and day and it was supposed that none would dare to enter it for any nefarious purpose. The miscreants tore down the Rood, burnt it in the neighbouring fields, and then returned home to Dedham. A clue was obtained and three of them were arrested; the fourth, Gard, saved himself by flight. Arraigned for the deed they were condemned, one being hung in chains at Causeway End, Manningtree. It will be remembered that some of the same band destroyed the great crucifix at Coggeshall Abbey. Mention of Coggeshall reminds me that it was a Dedham man, by name George Cole, a yeoman, who together with three others gave important evidence against Sir John Smythe, Kt., of Coggeshall, after his wild and ridiculous attempt to incite a mutiny among the trained bands mustered in the windmill field

at Colchester in 1596. The speech of Sir John on this occasion was remarkable for its silly extravagance. When condemned and lodged in prison the agitator excused himself by owning that he had taken too much "wine, white and red."

That the inhabitants of Dedham should have refused payment of ship money in 1635 will excite no surprise. Two of them, by name Thomas Wood and William Fisher, were committed to the Fleet in consequence. They pretended that the town was exempt, but it appears from a receipt given by John Wilkinson and Samuel Shearman in May of that year that their contribution amounting to £5 6s. 8d. (four marks apiece) was then paid. Wilkinson and Shearman, clothiers, were themselves in the same year committed to the Fleet for neglecting to collect the money by distress. In excuse they pleaded that by a letter lately found in the town chest, they conceived the town to be exempt; this excuse not being allowed, they express contrition. Colchester now appears to have taken up the cudgels on behalf of Dedham, and to have petitioned in favour of exemption, urging the heavy losses that town had recently sustained by bankruptcy (£2,000). Thereupon the Council was graciously pleased to "forbear to lay any tax" upon Dedham. Five years later we find two men of Dedham, Samuel Coles and John Cross, in trouble on the information of one John Watts, who deposed that he heard them speak many disloyal words of his Majesty at the Green Dragon in Bishops-gate Street, on which occasion they abused the King and his proceedings against the Scots, whom they held to be "honest people" that would "do us no harm but rather good." There

is a curious document, dated from Suffolk, July 10, 1666, and supposed to be written to Edward Colman, of Furnival's Inn, London, by one W. Battie, which contains a long account of the proceedings of the Dutch fleet. A Dutch hoy had stealthily landed 105 English prisoners, among them a certain Mr. Hill, who was "traitorously brought over to do the Dutch intelligence from England." Hill was a fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge, and had been turned out for non-subscription in 1662. He had since resided in Holland, where he was to marry a merchant's daughter with £2,500. Hill's papers, eight in number, were seized. The eighth is thus summarised in the Calendar of State Papers:—"M.N. to Mr. Alefounder, at Dedham. Requests him to favour his friend and brother, Mr. Hill, who may land at Harwich, and has lived two years with him, with a night's lodging, and a sale of a horse to take him to London, and to give him information what places to lodge in to avoid infection [the plague had broken out at Woodbridge]."

Langham, the next parish to Dedham, needs some brief notice while we are in Constable's country, for it was from Langham Church that the "Vale of Dedham" was painted. This church is remarkable for the curious contracted chancel, of which the north wall is in line with that of the nave, while the south wall stands within the width of the nave; the intervening space being filled by a slanting partition wall pierced by a decorated window. Some of the tombs are of interest, notably those of the Umfreville or Umfraville family. A quotation from Le Neve's *Knights* (Harleian Society) may here be given:—"Essex. Sr Charles Umfrevile

of Langham essex Kted. . . . G. an orle of crosses flory & cinque-foils or. Crest, an eagle's head p'per out of a ducall crown Or. Md. he did not pay fees so no Md. in the heralds office." In a blazon of arms of the worthy knight given in the Suckling papers the fourth quarter is azure, a sun in splendour. This is the coat of the St. Cleres of St. Osyth, of whom I shall write in the next chapter. Le Neve gives a pedigree of the Umfreviles in which mention is made of "St. Clere Vmphr. of Higham Hall Suffolk living in 1698 unmar." The parish of Langham at the time of the Survey belonged to Richard FitzGilbert, lord of Clare, and under him was held by Walter Tyrell. To Tyrell succeeded Henry de Cornhill, whose daughter and heiress married a Neville. The Nevilles held the manor for four generations, when it passed to William de Bohun, Earl of Northampton. His son Humphry, died in 1371, heavily in debt, and left his estates in trust for the liquidation of his liabilities. In 1385 Michael de la Pole owned Langham, which on his death in exile three years later reverted to the Crown. His family, after petition, had it restored to them, and it remained their property till the extinction of the line by the execution of Edmund, the last Duke of Suffolk. In 1509 Henry VIII. bestowed Langham on Queen Katherine of Arragon, and subsequently at her death gave it to Jane Seymour; next it passed to Charles Brandon, who, it will be remembered, obtained nearly the whole of the lands of Edmund, Duke of Suffolk. Charles Brandon died without surviving children in 1545, and Langham became again Crown property. Charles I. sold it at the same time as he sold Dedham in 1629. There is another

estate in Langham known by the name of Wenlocks which needs some notice. The Wenlocks who owned it were a branch of a Shropshire family of renown, and appear to have first established themselves in Langham in the reign of Henry III. In the reign of Edward I. Walter de Wenlock was Lord High Treasurer of England. The greatness of the Essex Wenlocks seems to have departed by the time Queen Elizabeth came to the throne, but a representative of the family resided at Langham in the reign of Charles II. His name was John Wenlock, and being an ardent Royalist he had suffered not a little from persecution. On the Restoration he petitioned for recompense and was actually offered a post of £300 a year, which he declined as insufficient. John Wenlock in 1662 published a curious book. The title-page states that the author "did intend to have placed Effigies and Coat of Armes" thereon, but "the exact Sculpture thereof being so chargeable, etc.," he requests the gentle Reader to accept of the Verses that he composed to be printed underneath the same, and to courteously correct the Printer's Errata. The dedication, which is "To the most Illustrious, High and Mighty Majesty of Charles II. etc." tells us that "John Wenlock of Langham in the county of Essex Esquire, was an Utter Barrister of nearly forty years continuance, in that Honourable Society of Lincolnes-Inne." Next follows "The Epistle Dedicatory," to be succeeded by a "Supplicatorie Discourse to his Majesty," which occupies nine-and-twenty pages. At length we come to the "Exact and very true relation of divers passages concerning the Loyal Demeans and injust Sufferings of your majesties true and faithfull subject John Wenlock;" etc., "and those of his

wife and family." The worthy old loyalist gives the most minute account of his adventures with a "pestiferous Constable," who was "horribly vexed in his rebellious stomach," and tells how a "Messenger of Satan," "a mean mechanical fellow a blacksmith by trade," was sent to "buffet" him. He plied the blacksmith with "good counsell," with the result that ultimately that messenger of Satan became "converted." Warrants against him seem to have flown about like autumn leaves. For years Wenlock seems to have been either fugitive or in hiding at home. The adventures of his eldest son, who went to join Lucas in the Essex Raid, are minutely and graphically narrated. Young Wenlock was taken prisoner at the capitulation of Colchester, and his father plumes himself on the fact that his son "had the honour to be counted a considerable prisoner, as being the son of the greatest malignant in the Country." The young man lost four horses there; two were killed outright in battle; the third was stolen, and the fourth was cooked for the garrison. Eventually the father, after undergoing the indignity of many domiciliary visits, was arrested and taken to Chelmsford, where he was put in gaol. Having been examined, he was set at liberty upon giving a bond for £500. He then managed to buy a cow, which was seized; and his wife was forced to redeem it on payment of nearly four times its value. Next the Sequestrators called upon him, and he feared the loss of his lands. They returned him "as lunatick," and up to London the poor man had to go to endeavour to save the wreck of his estate. In this he was successful and returned rejoicing,—when he found that some other charge had been made

against him for which he was thrown into prison. A sale and grant of his estates were issued ; but he escaped by giving a bond for £300. The volume finishes with a collection of verse, which sufficiently shows that, though a loyal gentleman, John Wenlock of Langham, Essex, Esquire, was no nursling of the Muses.

CHAPTER VI.

WIVENHOE, FINGRINGHOE, AND BRIGHTLINGSEA.

ABOUT five miles below Colchester, at a point where the river Colne begins to widen to an appreciable extent, stands the yacht-building and fishing village of Wivenhoe or Wyvenhoe. Upon the opposite bank, in the parish of East Donyland, is Rowhedge, a member of the Cinque Port of Sandwich. Beyond Rowhedge on the left hand, and lying more inland, the cottages of Fingringhoe are visible on the hill side.

It might be expected that there would be a good deal worth seeing and perhaps not a little worth sketching at Wivenhoe; there is, however, very little indeed. The church, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, shows but few signs of antiquity owing to the lavish handiwork of the restorer. Three brasses are worth looking at, especially that of Lady Elizabeth Scroope, who died in 1537.

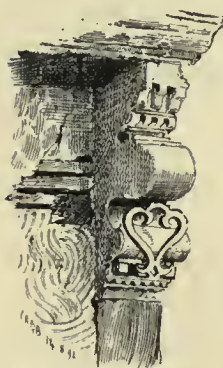


On a house which faces the west end of the church will be seen a cornice decorated with a vine-pattern in parge-work. It is in parge-work alone that Wivenhoe gives evidences of its age; down a side street not far from the church there is a really fine example

of this effective style of decoration. The portion which I selected for my sketch is about one-eighth of the whole design, which with slight variations covers the entire first floor front of the house. It will be possible to judge of the richness of this parge-work from the portion sketched; to have taken the whole house would not have been worth while, as beyond some curious brackets at the back there was nothing either in roof, chimney, or window to make a subject.¹ The brackets, of which I have sketched one, are now unfortunately from age and exposure in a very damaged condition. They are fixed high up just beneath the eaves, and are best seen from a most unsavoury



SMALL PART OF A WALL
WIVENHOE.



BRACKET, WIVENHOE.

back-yard. As they are of a peculiar type I considered it well to retain a record of them in case of accidents. The view down the river towards Brightlingsea is pretty, but more adapted for brush and colour than pen and ink as a subject. Far away beyond the boats and yachts, which for the most part seem to be out of commission or for sale, the tower of Brightlingsea Church stands up among the trees. Less impressive than the estuary of the Blackwater, the river Colne from Wivenhoe to the sea is far more pleasing. Here, as every-

¹ On the walls of a house on the left-hand side in Foundry Yard, High Street, Colchester, may still be seen a somewhat similar pattern, but simpler in design and much mutilated.

where in the flatter portions of the county, the cloud effects are peculiarly fine.

In the State Papers the references to Wivenhoe are mainly concerned with the building of ships. Mention is made in 1636 by Dr. Aylett of some difficulty in connexion with the presentation to the rectory of Wivenhoe, then vacant by the death of Mr. Cornwell. The right of presentation had been obtained for the King (the son of the late patron, Sir Roger Townsend, being



a minor), but it was claimed by Serjeant Whitfield as mortgagee of the manor of Wivenhoe. Dr. Aylett suggests to Archbishop Laud that by his influence perhaps the Serjeant might be induced not to press his claims. The conclusion of the document refers to one Boroughs, of Colchester, then in custody for disturbing three congregations at three several churches on a Sunday morning, and exhibiting a very scandalous libel against Church governors and Church governments. In a letter from Dunkirk, dated May 11, 1644, William Sandys writes to Sir Hugh

Cholmley, Governor of Scarborough, announcing that he has sent him certain arms by the King's order in the *Sunflower*, of Wivenhoe (Giles Wiggoner, master). The arms consisted of 182 rapiers, 142 belts, and 320 muskets. Two bags of hops and six puncheons of currants were also despatched by the same vessel. Payment for freight to the amount of £50 is to be made to Wiggoner within three days. On May 12, from the same writer, there is a letter to Marten Harpenson Van Tromp, Admiral of the States-General, at sea, describing the ship *Sunflower* and its lading, and adding: "I thought fit to certify you this that you may understand how the lading, ship and master with others in the ship are for his Majesty's special service, and of such concernment as may not be hindered by any of your Lordship's fleet without much prejudice to his Majesty's service and unfitting omission of regard due to the Alliance." In February, 1654-55, we read that the frigate "building" by Robert Pardy, at Wivenhoe, is "top-timbered," and that the builder desires his third instalment of payment according to contract. At the same time certain ketches were being built at Wivenhoe, and William Healey is recommended for the command of one of them, "he being well acquainted with the channel and the coast." Early in the next year Robert Page writes from Wivenhoe reporting progress in the building of two "advice boats" and repairing the *Drake*. He asks in this letter for a warrant to press caulkers in Suffolk. On February 9, 1655-56, the ketch is launched, being named the *Hind*. The captain, one Richard Country, reports that he has nine weeks' victuals on board, but that men are difficult to obtain; usually the victuals, not the men, were lacking. Four days

later comes the conflicting statement that both the *Roe* and the *Hind* ketches were still on the stocks and "having much work to be done" when he and his brother arrived, but that both have since been launched and that the two captains were busily engaged in pressing men and getting provisions aboard. On March 3 Captain Country writes from the ketch *Hind*, at Harwich, stating that he sailed on February 17 for the Downs, where he was ordered by the General to join with the *Kent* and ply between the North Foreland and Orford Ness on the look-out for Dunkirkers; being however forced in again, he was then sent to ply off Harwich. In the year 1657 Thomas Lawrence, Deputy Mayor, the Aldermen, and others of Colchester petition the Admiralty Commissioners. They state that "divers small Ostenders" have for several weeks infested the entrance to "our harbour," and have taken several vessels passing to and from London and on fishing affairs, to the ruin of divers families, and of the trade with London. They beg the employment of two "nimble" ketches to ply betwixt Harwich and the west of Kent, adding that as these private vessels are small and well piloted, the employment of some Wivenhoe vessels will be an effectual means of keeping this coast clear, for "they know the passages amongst the sands." In 1659 we find the captain of one of these ketches plundering a hired hoy from Flushing, which was manned by Englishmen. One Robert Walker, of Wivenhoe, was captain of the ketch, and the hoy was freighted with lime for the repair of the fortifications of Dunkirk. Walker chose to declare that the English crew were Swedes. He was, however, promptly arrested. At this date, from a contract note

extant, the cost of building these ketches was at the rate of £6 per ton.

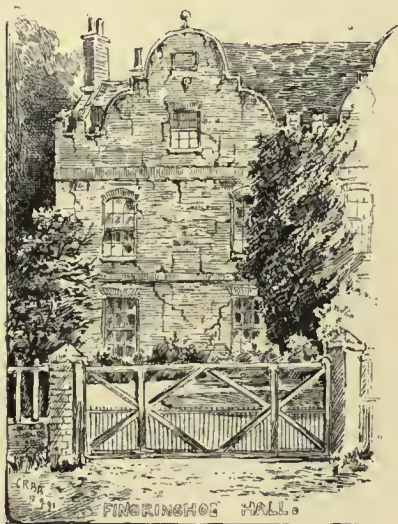
There appears in 1665 to have been a "Wivenhoe" ketch ; possibly this was the new one to the building and naming of which there are several references in this year. Her captain, by name William Berry, writes to Sir William Batten, sending particulars of his late voyage to the North of Scotland, in search of the Dutch Fleet. He met with eleven Dutch men-of-war off North Shetland, and was chased and within shot for seven hours. He, however, managed to capture a galliot hoy, with eight Dutch pilots for their East India Fleet ; but is now (July 28) obliged to lie in North Shields for repairs. In 1667, the Wivenhoe trawlers returned in all haste, and reported a fleet of 160 to 180 sail, "three of which were admirals," in the vicinity of the Nore. A galliot hoy, which was cruising at the same time and place, however, shortly after reduced this armada to "twelve or fourteen sail of Dutch," to the manifest relief of the public mind.

It may be worth while mentioning that in Wivenhoe, the curious feudal law called "Marcheat" or "Marchet" was in force in ancient days. This was a fine paid to the lord of the place for permission to marry. It is known that a certain Richard Burre held a messuage in this manor, on condition of paying the *Maritagium* if he wished to marry his daughter to a freeman out of the township ; but he was to be exempt if he married her to a freeman of the township.

By the ferry I cross from Wivenhoe Quay to the causeway which leads towards the hill upon which Fingringhoe

stands. From the top of the hill, the prospect is indeed a fair one, extending far over the level country. Before me, the narrower river glides through the meadows between Wivenhoe and the Hythe at Colchester, dotted here and there with the mast of a small boat, or the red sprit sail of a barge, which seems to grow out of the surrounding green. Behind me lies the wider Colne, which is visible as far as Brightlingsea, its banks

in places of a curious mauve grey tint, which I was at first unable to understand, but which subsequently turned out to be the mauve clustering blooms of a marsh-loving plant.



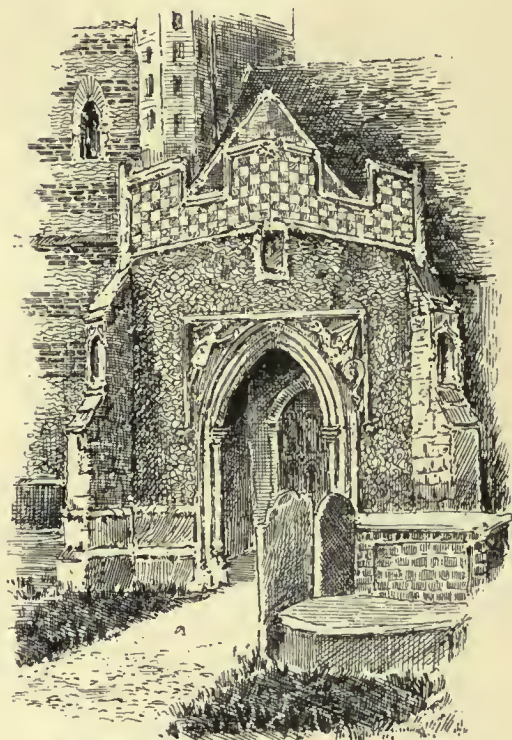
Fingringhoe is a tiny village with an attractive old manor house close by its ancient church. In the fields behind the manor house, there stands an old brick dovecot. The hall or manor house of Fingringhoe has three ornamental Elizabethan gables in its front, between which the parapet is crenellated. The side walls have crenellations also, but in the rear, as far as I could see, the gables are plain. Modern windows have been inserted in lieu of the ancient mullions, and the hall door, though by no means a new one, is yet of much later date than the house.

The manor of Fingringhoe was granted by a charter of Edward Confessor in 1046, it is usually supposed as a part

of West Mersey, to the abbey of St. Ouen, at Roan (Rouen) in Normandy. Be this a correct view or not, it is certain that the grant was admitted by William I. Various additional privileges were bestowed by Henry I. and II., and the manor remained the property of the alien house till the reign of Edward III., when it was seized by the King. In company with other manors, it was restored again to ecclesiastical owners, for we find the prior of Mersey presented to the vicarage in 1368. Five years later the King presented, and the same thing happened in the reign of Richard II. (1393). On the total suppression of alien priories in 1414, this estate was granted to Henry Chichley, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who endowed a college at Higham Ferrers therewith. Henry VIII. granted Fingringhoe after the Dissolution to Robert Dacres in whose family it did not remain for long, as in 1553 we find Edward VI. bestowing it on Thomas, Lord D'Arcy of Chiche, with whom I shall have to do in the next chapter. The remainder of the changes in the ownership of the manor are unimportant.

Only a few paces beyond the hall, and on the opposite side of the road, stands the interesting little Fingringhoe church, with its square tower composed of horizontal bands of brick and rubble, and stone-faced south-east turret stair. I have selected the south porch as the subject of one of my sketches. This porch is mainly built of flint, with a curious embattled parapet, composed of squares of dressed stone and flint. The original roof has apparently been destroyed, and a plaster gable is now seen in its place. Specially worthy of notice are the carvings in the spandrels of the porch

arch, which represent St. Michael and the Dragon. Above this arch there was once a niche, with an image of the Virgin and Child, but the image is gone, and the niche is ruined; the pinnacles which formerly surrounded the embattlements of the



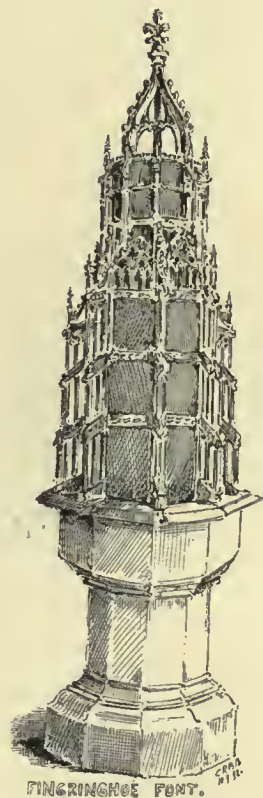
S. PORCH, FINGRINGHOE.

parapet have shared a like fate. The inner archway is plain, but the old door, upon which the huge iron handle yet remains, is a very handsome one, the lower panels having somewhat elaborate tracery, while the upper row is even more highly decorated. The interior of the church displays careful attempts at the proper preservation of the many bits of antiquity it contains, but money is sadly needed to prevent decay—not to “restore.” It is earnestly to be hoped that some kindly

aid will be given to this small and poor parish, for the purpose of effecting church repairs. Just within the south door stands the font of which the carved oak crocketed cover, like that rare type at Thaxted, opens for purposes of use in lieu of being raised aloft, by means of a counterpoise. The design of this canopy is

very good, and the oak has been carefully cherished. Remains of several distemper paintings are to be seen on the pillars, among which "St. Michael weighing Souls," "The Vision or Mass of St. Gregory," "The Virgin," have been identified, though in all probability others would be found were investigation possible. The chancel arch has been curiously shaved off to make room for pews at its base, a condition of things which needs revision; in fact, the entire seating arrangements of the church are barbarous. Within the sanctuary is a small brass to John Alleyn, late of Wevenho, and Ailse his daughter. References to the Alleyn family need not here be made beyond this, as it will be met with later on at Hazeleigh. Within the vestry is a large five-banded chest which has the date 1684 on its lid. It now only remains to notice the strange bosses on the timbers of the roof, which are of a type of very uncommon occurrence and more than usual ugliness.

From Fingringhoe I made my way to Brightlingsea, a paradise for yachts. It is now growing into a large place, but hardly looks as prosperous as it did a few years back; for here times are also bad. From an antiquarian point of view, Brightlingsea may be summed up as follows: One old house with a quaint external turret stair, and a handsome church distant a mile and a half from the town.



FINGRINGHOE FONT.

Brightlingsea was granted at the Conquest to Eudo Dapifer, who endowed the Abbey St. John's, Colchester, therewith, and con-



sequently until the reign of Henry VIII. there is no change of ownership to record. It was then granted to Thomas Lord Cromwell, in but a brief time to revert to the crown whose property it remained till the reign of Queen Elizabeth, when Sir Thomas Hennage became the owner. Some curious customs appear in ancient days to have existed on this manor which are mostly concerned with the succession to property and the right of heriot. One custom was as follows: "Every tenant of this manor may, for his tenement, according to the custom of the manor, put upon the commons one sheep and a half for every acre that he holdeth, and as many hogs as he may reasonably keep, to be lawfully ringed and yoked; and every cottager may keep one barrow pig, ringed and yoked.

It is not easy to obtain any reliable information as to the origin of the old turreted house. I found that many natives of Brightlingsea had never even noticed it; and, strangely enough, I have been unable to find any reference to the place in any of the many works on the county of Essex. As will be seen by the sketch, both house and turret are of very small size and can never have belonged to an extensive or important mansion. The occurrence of a turret stair upon so small a scale is most unusual; in fact, I am not aware of any other example in Essex. Ingatestone Hall has its corner tower, and the octagonal towers of Eastbury are well known; but these are houses of large size, while here we

have a house possessing only a ground floor and an attic with the elegant little turret in one corner.

The sketch here given will afford some slight idea of the character of the scenery around Brightlingsea. It was taken on the edge of the green at the further end of the village and beyond the old tur-



reted house. Fields slope gently down to the shore of Brightlingsea Creek, a shore lined with small craft and barges, while anchored boats dot the waters. Upon the right are cottages and fishers' huts; upon the left, in the middle distance, a small and now useless Martello tower, while beyond stretches the shore of Mersea Island.

Brightlingsea Church, as has been stated, stands remote, about a mile and a half from the centre of the place, and upon rather higher ground, so that its noble tower can be seen far and wide. This church, dedicated to All Saints, is a very fine perpendicular building, its west end being specially worthy of notice. Besides a handsome west door the west windows are very good indeed, and the series of niches on the buttresses, forty in all, produce a grand effect and render the whole of this end of the structure perhaps as elegant as any to be found in this country, rich in church architecture though



it be. Near the ground a diaper of scutcheons forms yet another adornment, and I think that there will be few to deny that the noble tower of Brightlingsea is one of the sights of Essex. The church itself possesses a nave and chancel, aisles, chapels, and a handsome south porch. Round this porch runs a beautiful decoration in two bands, the upper of which consists of panel work with trefoil ornaments in relief, the lower of trefoil decorated panels; crowns, flowers and the emblem of the Trinity are here also to be seen. On the south chapel outside is a frieze of dressed stone and flint. Within the church there is much to interest, especially in the way of brasses, merchant marks, and

rather dubious heraldry. The south chapel contains two niches, crocketed and painted, in one of which there is a mutilated statue also painted. In the nave floor is the brass of a man and wife which originally had four inscriptions, two of which are now lost. Close by the south door, on the west side of it, there is a curious niche, probably once a stoup, the centre of which is supported by stonework.

Good bosses in carved oak appear in the roof of the nave, the pillars of which have niches cut therein; on the north side there are two, on the south side opposite there is one. At the east end of the north aisle two more niches appear, which are now partly closed. In the north aisle there are two brasses of women, but the inscriptions are lost. The monumental records have been better preserved in the north chapel. There I found the brass of John Beriffe (1578). Another, earlier, is of a man and his three wives; the brass effigies of two of them have been lost, but those of the five sons and four daughters of the first and the five children of each of the other two wives still remain. This brass has an interesting merchant's mark on a scutcheon. A third brass is to two women unknown. The fourth, and last, marks the tomb of a man and his two wives, four sons and one daughter being beneath the first wife while the second has two sons and three daughters. This brass has also a merchant's mark, but within a circle. It is stated that the Beriffe family bore arms of which the blazon runs as follows:—

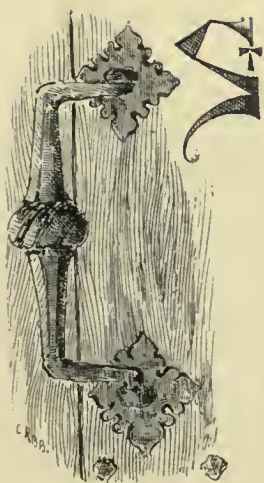
Arms.—Azure, on a chevron engrailed argent between three trefoils slipped ermine as many lioncels rampant sable armed and langued gules.

Crest.—Out of a mural coronet gules a demi-lion rampant or, ducally crowned of the first, holding in the dexter paw a trefoil slipped vert. (Visitation of 1634. *Harl. Soc. Publ.*)

But the more ancient crest was this: In grass proper a beaver passant also proper, collared or; and this crest is given in Robson as belonging to the above arms. In Wright's history of Essex, however, we find the shield thus: On a fesse gules, a lion passant, or, between six trefoils slipt, vert. No tincture is given. There is, however, no doubt that the Colchester and Brightlingsea branches of the Beriffe family came from the same stock; the only difficulty is to discover when and why their arms were changed. It is on record that about the middle of the 16th century the representative of the Brightlingsea Beriffe was William, a mariner, but the existing pedigrees do not begin until later. Morant tells us, probably on the authority of Holman, that the Beriffe family "anciently resided in a house called Jacobes in Brightlingsey; and several of them are interred in the church there, under fair marble stones; the first of them in 1496, which shows them to have been persons of some note." He gives the same arms as Wright; these arms, however, I have been unable to trace elsewhere. Upon the walls of the north aisle are some hatchments, one of which, bearing eight quarterings, is very curious; the blazon is too long to give, but the charge in the first quarter is very remarkable, savouring of an incomplete or irregular rebated cross potent.

CHAPTER VII.

ST. OSYTH.



OSYTH, with its curious church and interesting old priory, is a village distant three miles from Brightlingsea and about the same from Clacton-on-Sea. In ancient days St. Osyth was called variously Cise or Chich, the origin of which nomenclature appears to be very doubtful. The present name was derived from the virgin martyr in whose honour the priory was founded, a foundation which replaced the Saxon nunnery—the premier religious house in Essex. Not a trace now remains of this original nunnery, nor, indeed, of the original church mentioned in the legend of St. Osyth. The legend of St. Osyth is told by not a few ancient writers and with not a few variations as to detail. One account was written by Alberic de Vere, canon of St. Osyth's (*circa* 1160). Her history is also given in Capgrave's

Nova Legenda Angliae, which was printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1516. I find, however, that St. Osyth is left out of the translation of this book printed three years later by the same printer. Leland in his *Itinerary* has a brief notice of the saint. Information may, of course, be found in Alban Butler's *Lives of the Saints*. Probably one account is as true as another in this case, and I will therefore give but a brief digest of the legend. St. Osyth was of noble birth, being the daughter of King Frithwald and Wilburga, daughter of Penda, King of Mercia. She was brought up and educated by St. Modwen, who having built two monasteries, ruled one herself and placed St. Edith, the sister of King Alfred, in authority over the other. St. Osyth was sent by St. Edith, with whom she had for some time resided, to take a book and a message to St. Modwen, and chancing to fall into the river by the way was drowned. Three days later, owing to a vision, she was sought there, and in answer to the prayers of St. Modwen and St. Edith was restored to life. Subsequently, under the compulsion of her parents, she was married to Sighere, King of the East Saxons, but the marriage was never consummated. One day while Sighere was absent hunting a stag of surpassing beauty, his wife seized the opportunity of taking the veil and on the return of her husband she was found vowed to cloister life. It appears that eventually Sighere built her a monastery at Chich, whither St. Osyth retired with certain other maidens and pursued a life of great austerity. This nunnery was in 653 attacked, plundered, and destroyed by the Danes, the names of Inguar and Habba being handed down as the

leaders. St. Osyth being seized was sorely tried by threats of punishment in the endeavour to make her forsake her faith, and upon her scornful refusal to sacrifice to the Danish gods was at once decapitated. This took place in a little wood at a spot where from that day a spring of water gushed forth. But the most remarkable event was to follow. No sooner was the head of St. Osyth cut off than she arose and taking her head in her hands walked with it to the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, half a mile distant, where she knocked at the door and then fell dead. How it happened that the nunnery was destroyed and the church escaped the legend does not state ; nor indeed is there any hint of the effect produced by so extraordinary an occurrence upon the minds of the Danes who were present. King Frithwald and her mother having obtained the body of St. Osyth, placed it in a leaden chest, and buried it at Aylesbury ; where miracles at once began to be wrought, till the removal by stealth of her body to Chich changed the scene thereof. The adventures of the man who stole the body are curious, but he must have been influentially backed, as we find Maurice, Bishop of London, and the Bishop of Rochester both assisting at the honourable second entombment at Chich. The Bishop of Rochester was on the occasion cured of a serious malady. Many of the miracles are mentioned in detail, but they are too lengthy to quote here. The Nunnery of St. Osyth then lay ruined and desolate until the reign of Henry I., when between the years 1108 and 1120 Richard de Belmeis, Bishop of London, founded there a house of Augustinian canons, the first prior being William de Corbeuil. St. Osyth was buried in the Church

of St. Peter and St. Paul, which she had herself founded, and which is stated to have been upon the same site as the present church; but it is open to doubt whether there have not been three churches in all at St. Osyth upon the present site. The original Saxon church, doubtless a small one, gave way to a larger church, or had a large nave added to it. Portions of this nave can, I think, be traced in the perpendicular church which now exists. It is worthy of remark that the chancel of St. Osyth church is a very deep and narrow one, and might easily have been built upon the actual ground plan of the original Saxon church. Bishop Belmeis from the tomb in St. Osyth removed one arm of the Saint, which he encased in a proper receptacle and deposited in the priory church. It is curious to note that at the Suppression not the arm of St. Osyth, but the skull was discovered among the treasures of the priory as appears by the catalogue of effects. Bishop Belmeis died in 1127, and was buried in the priory. Four years previous to the death of Belmeis, William de Corbeuil, the first prior, had been made Archbishop of Canterbury. He was a man of evil reputation, being notorious for his intense greed for gold. His conduct with regard to Stephen and the Empress Matilda stamps him as a man who held an oath in but slight esteem. Corbeuil died in 1136. It were too tedious to enumerate the benefactions by which the originally small priory became, next to Waltham Holy Cross and the Nunnery of Barking, the most wealthy religious house in the county. Suffice it to say that at the time of the Suppression its revenues amounted to £682 1s. 6d.

The present buildings of St. Osyth's Priory, at least of the older portion, date only from the reign of the last abbot but one, who was elected in 1495 and died in 1533. The last abbot was John Colchester, alias Witherick, who had been prior, and it was under his rule that the subscription to the King's supremacy was signed in 1534. Some of the estates of the priory were alienated in 1538 by licence, and on July 28, 1539, Abbot Colchester, the prior and sixteen canons signed the deed of surrender to the King, when St. Osyth, its priory church, its treasures, its manors and its buildings were handed over to the King's commissioners, by name Sir John St. Clere, Sir William Purton, John Pekynes, Thomas Myldmay and Francis Jobson. Sir John St. Clere belonged to an ancient Essex family, whose chief dwelling, St. Clere's Hall, stood about half a mile south of St. Osyth Church. He appears to have been very active in the matter of his duties, and a curious letter of his to Cromwell yet exists in which St. Clere reports an interview with the luckless John Beche (abbot of St. John's, Colchester). He states that he advised the abbot to submit to spoliation as the abbot of St. Osyth, "an honest man," had already done. Beche refused, urging that "he knew by his learning he cannot take it by right and law: wherefore in my conscience I cannot be content, nor shall he ever have it with my heart and will." St. Clere states that he replied, "Beware of such learning; for if ye hold such learning as ye learned at Oxenford when ye were young, ye will be hanged, and ye are worthy." John Beche was hanged. Of the juggling which went on to obtain the rich prize of the

grant of St. Osyth's I cannot here enter into details. It is of course not surprising to find my Lord Audeley (then Sir Thomas), the chancellor of the Court of Augmentations, resorting to every possible artifice to obtain his desires. His letters on this subject are marked by mean cringing subserviency, especially that one which concludes with a gouty lament,—

“Scribelid this Satyrday with a sore and akyng foote.

“Your lordshippes assured to his pour

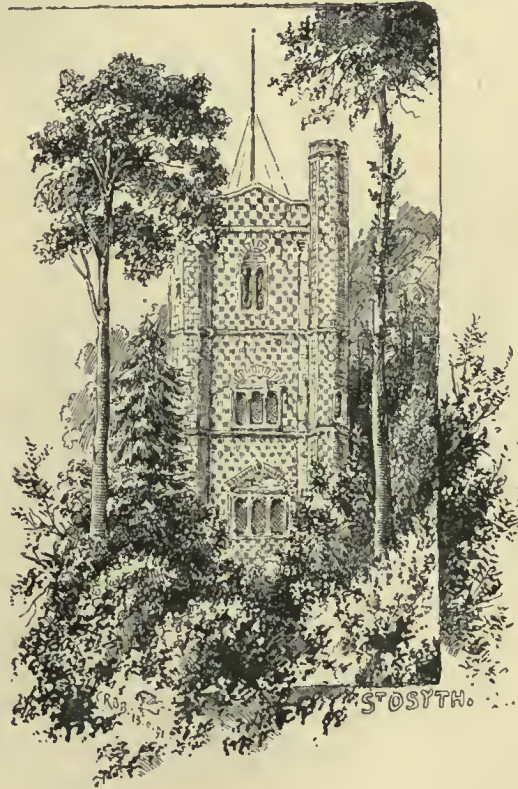
“THOMAS AUDELEY, *Chancellor.*”

But Audeley did not get St. Osyth, and had to be content with Walden. Cromwell, who knew the value of the priory, had selected it as part of his own share of the plunder; and there were special reasons which made the place particularly valuable. Having been founded by a churchman (Bishop Belmeis) there were no descendants to lay any claim. The de Veres tried to establish a claim on the score of an ancient benefaction, but it was disallowed. So the abbot, John Colchester, was pensioned off, receiving £100 per annum and some of the plate, the prior had a pension of £10, five of the canons £8, and the remaining nine £6 13s. 4d. each. There is a most copious and detailed list of the property, landed and otherwise, of the priory of St. Osyth, in which each article has its assessed value written against it, and also in many cases the purchaser, the names of Sir John Seyntcler (St. Clere) and Francis Jobson occurring with great frequency. Jobson, it will be remembered, was the son of a Colchester merchant, and married a descendant of Jane Shore, in consequence of which he impaled the arms of England, Lisle and Mortimer with a bastoon sinister.

He was knighted in the reign of Edward VI. and died in 1573. Besides the seat on the Court of Augmentations he was lieutenant of the Tower, 1564, in succession to Sir Richard Blount. Jobson amassed great wealth, chiefly by the plunder of religious houses. Of the size and extent of the nunnery of St. Osyth at the time of the martyrdom of the saint nothing is known, and it is only by tradition that it is held to have occupied the same site as the priory founded by Bishop Belmeis early in the twelfth century. Relics of this foundation may yet be seen at St. Osyth, but they are scanty. Just without the gatehouse, in a wall known as the "Bury," which runs at right angles to that building, is a large and heavily moulded circular arch. On the other side of the precincts are fragments of another arch, and there is also the beautiful crypt which forms the basement of the building shown in my largest sketch. This crypt has been called a chapel, in my opinion wrongly, for the rule of the Catholic Church has ever forbidden domestic buildings to be above any place devoted to worship. The upper portion of this building may have been a chapel, and very likely was a chapel, but this crypt could never have been the chapel. The shape and position of the now destroyed priory church has been ascertained, and the details are luckily preserved to us. It was cruciform, and possessed a nave with a south aisle only, two transepts and a chancel, north and south chapels, with a vestry pertaining to the former, and an additional chapel at the north-west end. The tower was without a spire and contained five bells. There were three chief altars, that of the patroness saint being in the choir,

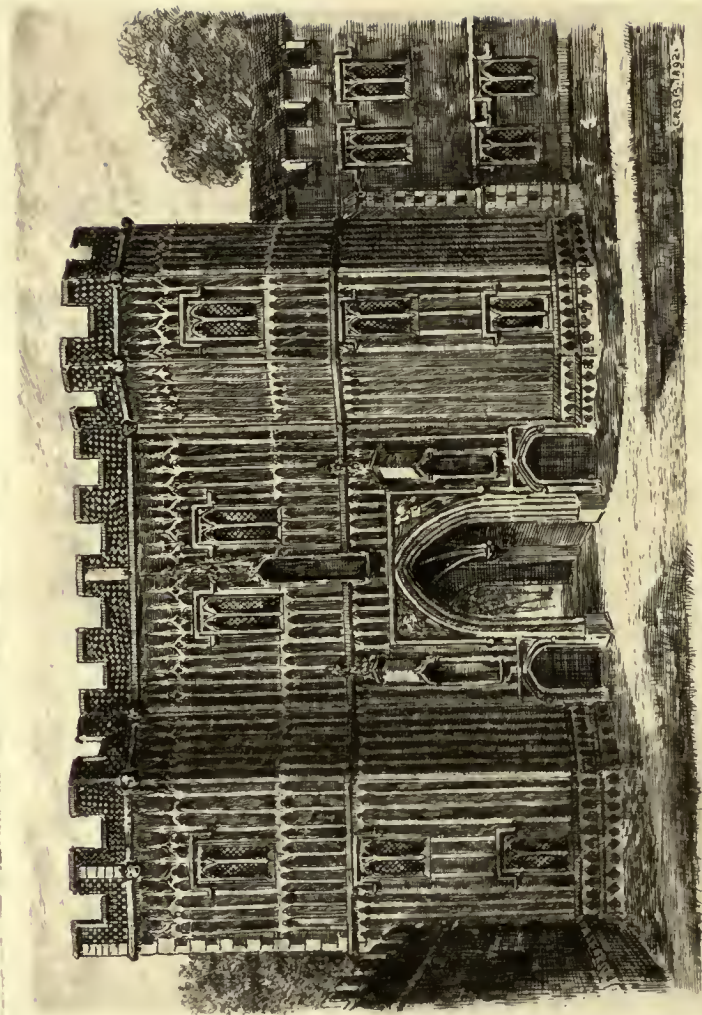


those of Jesus and the Virgin in the side chapels. Record remains of two pairs of organs in the rood loft and one in the Lady Chapel. Cloisters and the chapter-house stood upon the north side, space being perhaps supplied for the former by the absent



north aisle. Mention is made of a dormitory which had a north aisle and a "rere dorter" or dormitory behind it. The refectory occupied one side of the conventual quadrangle, upon the west of which and near to the west end of the church stood the

abbot's lodgings. Two halls were in existence at the time of the suppression; the old one had a chamber attached to it, the new one, or great hall, had a "greate chamber" above it. Two particular rooms are mentioned as being named the "moon chamber" and the "sun and star" chamber respectively, names which probably originated in the decorations of their walls and ceilings. The crypt of which I have made mention is a very beautiful little building with a groined roof, supported by very slender central shafts. Recently it has been converted into a species of private chapel, coloured glass being inserted in the windows, and a stone pseudo-altar-rail now blocking the entrance to a side recess. It should be added that the level of this crypt floor is beneath the level of the ground, another argument to show that it never was the chapel. The present conventual buildings consist of the beautiful gatehouse, the abbot's tower and the clock tower, to which must be added the large window (now beautifully restored) which forms the oriel in the modern drawing-room. The general appearance of the priory may be gathered from the sketch, which shows the place as viewed from the open green in front of the gatehouse. Behind the many-buttressed walls, and showing above the ilex trees, the turreted abbot's tower is seen on the right; next to it appears the clock tower with the adjoining gable, while on the left the wing of the gatehouse buildings just comes in. The clock tower and the adjoining buildings will appear more in detail in the sketch taken beneath the great gateway. Now almost the whole of these buildings are faced with dressed stone and flint in squares, and luckily they have been so looked after as to be



Gatehouse, St. Dyff.

safe from the effects of wind and storm. A curious carved stone chimney should especially be noted; also the extremely elegant cluster of four which appears* in the sketch of the ruins. The abbot's tower may be seen from the garden, where its peculiar design will at once be apparent. From the top of this tower the view over land and water is very fine indeed.

It remains to mention the gatehouse, which, though less romantically situated than the famed gatehouse of Battle Abbey, is in itself far more beautiful. This noble building consists of two



rather dissimilar flanking towers, which are connected by the gatehouse proper and its grand wide arch. Wings of three bays extend upon either side. The wall of the "Bury" joins the end of the left-hand flanking tower, and runs out across the open green space in front of the gate. Over the gateway there is one floor only, though the flanking towers beneath this level are divided into two rooms each. Beautifully ornamental dressed stone and flint work decorates the main portion of the gatehouse in a somewhat similar manner to that upon the gate of St. John's Abbey at Colchester. The embattled top is however different, and is

composed of dressed flint and stone disposed in alternating bays of squares and diamonds. Three fine niches are in the central part of the gatehouse, one being upon each side of the gate arch, while that in the centre has a crocketed canopy reaching to the

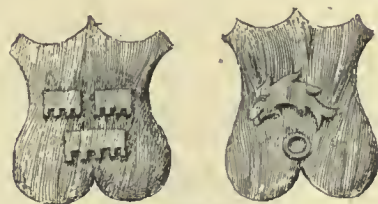


uppermost drip-stone string-course, on which the parapet rests. The spandrels of the archway, representing St. Michael and the Dragon, are very beautiful. On going through the gateway, which has noble groining to its roof, the porter's lodge is seen, in a tolerably perfect state; nor is the inner face of this grand range

of buildings inferior in interest to its exterior, though it is of course far plainer in appearance.

I must now speak of the great oriel window of the present drawing-room. Towards the end of the last century the mullions were removed and the window was blocked up. Recently the window has been restored, and many fragments of the original mullions have been utilised. The large series of ancient devices, heraldic and otherwise, which ornament it both inside and out, renders this window one of the most remarkable objects in the whole county. The tracery in the splay of the window is very ornate and very elegant, containing no less than seventy-two different ornamentations, which take the form of coat armour, knots, badges, religious emblems, rebuses, and monograms. From the date 1527, which twice occurs, we may know that the builder was the last abbot but one, John Vyntoner, even without the testimony of his rebus, which with many a variation occurs frequently upon the scutcheons, sometimes accompanied by his monogram, sometimes alone. An immense amount of ingenuity has been expended in constructing "Vine" and

"ton" rebuses both here and in a valuable series of oak panels dispersed through the modern house. Tunstall, Bishop of London, appears with his arms, three combs;



FROM ST. OSYTH'S.

the three crowns of St. Osyth are there; the five wounds; cross keys and sword, surmounted by the papal tiara; and the arms of the original Earls of Essex and Eu, the Bouchiers. The

symbol of Christianity, the fish, is represented ; a white hart bearing a bunch of grapes ; the head of the martyred St. Osyth ; and the common Tudor device of the portcullis. The royal arms and many another badge or shield enrich the splay of this glorious-relic of Tudor art.

Nor indeed are the oak panels, of which I have spoken before, of less interest ; and it almost seems a pity that they could not have all been collected to line the walls of one great chamber, for assuredly they must in recent times have been placed in the positions they now occupy. This is however a question of taste merely ; the panels are safe and well cared for. If, however, they are a specimen of the woodwork with which the Abbot Vyntoner enriched his house, St. Osyth must indeed have been a glorious building before evil days fell upon the Church. Strange it is to relate, yet true, that the date when the buildings and the church were demolished is quite unknown. That they were carefully preserved at first is evident from documents still extant, though the very lead on the roofs was measured and valued, the very pots and pans in the kitchen were valued and sold, and the plate, vestments, relics and furniture fell a prey to the spoilers, not a little being removed to the neighbouring St. Clere's Hall. The priory itself fell to the share of Thomas Cromwell, but on his attainder and execution reverted to the King, who seems at one time to have contemplated erecting the estate into an "honor." This was not however carried out, and in the reign of Edward VI. St. Osyth was granted to the Princess Mary for her life or until her marriage, the reversion being given to Sir Thomas D'Arcy,

Kt., who had married Lady Elizabeth de Vere, daughter of the fifteenth Earl of Oxford. Sir Thomas was created Lord D'Arcy of Chiche in 1550. St. Osyth seems by arrangement to have been relinquished by the Princess Mary in exchange for the manor of Eye and the castle and park of Framlingham in Suffolk, together with other lands. Lord D'Arcy shortly after obtained possession of St. Osyth, but the grant proved to be bad owing to a technicality, and it was needful to obtain a fresh one. This fresh grant cost the new peer £3,974 9s. 4½d. The D'Arcys were an ancient Essex family who had been settled in the county for centuries. Its members had supplied sheriffs for three generations, but none had prospered so well as the first Lord D'Arcy. He, besides holding important posts about the court in the reigns of Henry VIII. and Edward VI., at length obtained a peerage and the Garter. Dying in 1558 at Wyvenhoe, he was buried at St. Osyth. The first Lord D'Arcy made additions to the priory and perhaps destroyed as well. Evidence of his handiwork is shown by the D'Arcy "cinquefoil" and the Vere "mullet." His son and successor, John, second Lord D'Arcy, acted as host at St. Osyth to Queen Elizabeth, as we learn from Nichol's *Progresses*, in both 1561 and 1579. The second Lord D'Arcy was the first outwardly conforming Protestant of his race; it is however doubtful whether his conformity was other than assumed. He died in 1580-1 and was buried in St. Osyth's Church, by his will causing his executor to erect monuments to his father and mother, himself and his wife, monuments which are there to this day. The third Lord D'Arcy

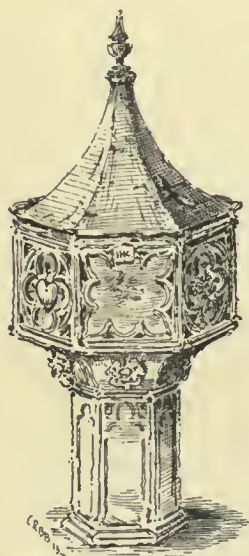
married Mary, the daughter and coheiress of Sir Thomas Kytson, in 1583. They did not agree, and after a few years (during which time a son and four daughters were born) determined to separate. This they did, and lived apart for forty years. The son and the brothers of the third lord dying childless, a difficulty occurred with regard to the succession to the estates; and to prevent St. Osyth from reverting to the Crown at his death he obtained a new grant at a cost of £500 to himself, his heirs and assigns for ever. This third lord seems to have openly professed the Catholic faith, and ran great risks of losing all his possessions for recusancy, Carr, the notorious Viscount Rochester, having an eager desire to obtain the reversion thereof. The settlement of the estates caused much trouble, but eventually St. Osyth went to his daughter Elizabeth, who had married Sir Thomas Savage. Lord D'Arcy had been created in 1621 Viscount Colchester with remainder to his son-in-law, Sir Thomas Savage, and in 1626 was advanced to the dignity of Earl Rivers with a similar remainder. He died in 1639, his wife surviving him five years. Her will, which is of immense length, is remarkable for the extraordinarily minute directions which it contains as to the disposition of her old clothes. The daughter of the third earl, who lost her husband before the death of her father, was a Catholic, and suffered much persecution on that account. Nevertheless she was by patent created Countess Rivers in 1641. In the following year a riotous mob of Essex fanatics wrecked her house at St. Osyth, destroying all her property in the most wanton manner. The countess managed to escape to Bury St.

Edmunds where with difficulty she obtained admittance into the town and shelter for one night. Afterwards she escaped to London, having not only had her property at St. Osyth destroyed but also her house and park at Melford. Her losses have been estimated at over £100,000. After many troubles, including imprisonment for debt and the payment of a compounding fee to the Parliament of £16,979 9s. 10d., the unfortunate Lady Rivers died in 1650. From this time forward, till St. Osyth passed to the third Earl of Rochford in 1710, it ceased to be the chief mansion of the family, but its new possessor added a modern house to the then much dilapidated place. I have purposely passed by this period of family history of the Nassaus, Earls of Rochford, as St. Osyth was in no way concerned with it; and indeed some of the events which took place between the dates 1650 and 1710 may well be allowed to rest. The fourth Earl of Rochford was high in favour with George II., and filled many important offices. He is chiefly remarkable as being the only man of note who was not abused by Junius, nay, was even mentioned with praise. The earl was succeeded by a nephew, who died childless in 1830, when the earldom became extinct.

The church of St. Osyth, dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, is a large and irregularly built, but very interesting structure, consisting of a stumpy, but very massive brick tower, nave of four bays, (the pillars of which are of brick, cased with plaster), aisles, and corresponding chapels, and a chancel. Architecturally, the greater portion of the church is of the earlier perpendicular style, but some

portions are decidedly of greater antiquity. Rubble and flint, similar to the work in the older portions of the priory, are the material used for the building, with the exception of the tower; and it may be noted with regard to this tower, that the buttresses are of a strength altogether disproportionate to its height and size, and that the built-out stair turret at the south-eastern angle, is also singularly lacking in elegance. The carving at the north door should be noted, where are to be seen the crowned M and a hand armed with a sword which is breaking a spiked wheel. Within the church, however, one cannot help being much interested, not only in the tombs and memorials, but also in the curious arrangement of the chancel arch, not to mention several quaint remains of ecclesiastical seating arrangements. I will first notice more particularly the chancel arch, which is surmounted by three flat pointed windows, and stands not in the centre of the east wall of the nave, but upon the north side. This, I incline to think, was not the original chancel arch of the church, that having stood where the two pierced buttresses are now to be seen and where in all probability the original rood screen stood. In many places may be seen relics of mural paintings. The wall of the south aisle was formerly so decorated, but the paintings had been concealed by whitewash. It is deeply to be regretted that, when the restorations were made, the plaster was entirely stripped from the south aisle and the paintings wantonly destroyed. Upon the most easterly pier on the north side is a painter's mark, of unusually late date, probably recording the initials of some workman employed. The lepers' window is still to be seen, though now closed up. Of the

font I give a sketch, and it will be observed that the devices thereon are curious ; the central panel formerly contained a figure, which was there, I was informed, within living memory. This figure has now vanished, but upon a small square stone the monogram I.H.C is still visible. The panel upon the left bears a heart with rather uncommon twists issuing from it, while that on the right has a knot badge of good design. An old and ruinous wooden cover surmounts the vessel. In the north aisle the carved oak roof is both good and rare in type as far as its carvings are concerned, especially if the curiously



FONT ST. OSYTH.



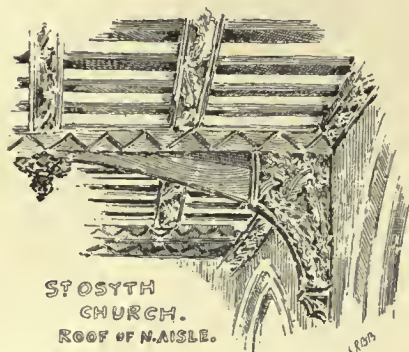
A PAINTER'S MARK.

half-decorated brackets are considered. My sketch shows only a small portion of this roof, but enough to give an idea of the whole ; and it will easily be seen that the conventional foliage of the bracket sketched is quite unusual. I am inclined to think that the pendant in the centre of the beam is a portion of carving which has been removed from some other part of the roof and placed where it now is. The regulation "family pew" in the north chapel would in itself be sufficiently curious were it not completely eclipsed by another in the south chapel which

seems to be modelled upon the lines of an ancient family coach, and is actually provided with a roof.

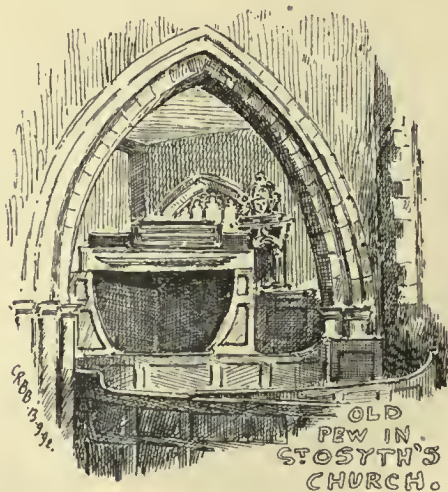
I now come to the chancel and the tombs ; and I must confess

to a feeling of much regret at many things which have here been done recently. With the best of intentions, but with the most lamentable results, a large sum of money has been spent on this chancel.



The colours and designs applied to the walls need only to be seen to be loathed; the representation of hangings, which serves as a "dado," is specially odious. The ancient "fold," the peculiar and

very rare horseshoe arrangement of altar-rails, has been removed, to be replaced by a modern copy in stone and marble; the pavement being laid down with an expensive (but inappropriate) mosaic. Now, as everybody knows, this "fold" ecclesiastically was incorrect, but it existed, albeit out of repair, and possessed the merit of antiquity; its date, which I have endeavoured without success to trace, in all probability was that of the Laudian persecution, the "fold" representing the outcome of some compromise upon the Essex altar-rails question. To say that this form was adopted because the tombs in the chancel rendered the



space so narrow is upon the face of it absurd. Lovers of antiquity will, I believe, agree with me upon the above subject; for if it was absolutely necessary to remove the "fold," the substitution of an ordinary rail would assuredly have been more in accordance with the dictates of common sense. In this chancel the tombs are very fine ones; that on the north side has two recumbent figures and marks the grave of John Lord D'Arcy of Chiche and his wife Frances, the daughter of Richard Lord Rich. The elbow of the effigy of Lord D'Arcy had recently been knocked off, and I was informed that this was the mischievous act of one of two persons sketching in the church who called themselves artists. A very similar tomb is on the south side of the chancel, which was erected to Thomas First Lord D'Arcy and his wife the lady Elizabeth de Vere. Upon this side of the chancel the arch communicating with the south chapel was until recent times blocked up. Not long since it was opened, and if left open would have been well enough, but unfortunately it has been filled with a stone screen, eminently handsome in its way but very incongruous. This chapel belonged in former days to St. Clere's Hall, but within it not a few members of the D'Arcy family are buried, the mural tablet which appears behind the "family coach" being a memorial of many of those who lie there. Let it not be supposed that money has been stinted in the restoration of St. Osyth Church; far from it, money has been lavished, and there is the uncomfortable reflection remaining that untold harm has been done with, alas! no commensurate advantage. A church is a public building, and its reparation or restoration should be under some proper controlling power.

A man can do what he pleases with his private dwelling : antiquaries may silently deplore the results, but have no right to openly complain. In the case of a parish church, and so interesting a parish church as St. Osyth, matters are different : *hinc illae lacrymae*.

I have previously mentioned the St. Clere family, and it will be now needful to touch briefly on the relics of the old manor house (near St. Osyth) which was formerly their home. It stands upon the other side of a small valley to the south-east of the church, and is approached by an avenue of gnarled and twisted trees, which evidently in former times led to the bridge across the moat. The moat is still there in part, and full of water, but the bridge and gatehouse (if any) have gone. From the outside there does not appear to be anything of interest in St. Clere's, but within I succeeded in finding various quaint bits of old work. The door which admits into the house opens into what was once the main hall, where are the remains of the old screen. Curious antique pictures hang about its walls, nearly all of them being in the last stage



of decay ; the wonder is that they do not fall out of their frames. In one room is a small carved scutcheon bearing the St. Clere blazon, azure, a sun in splendour or ; quartered with another coat. This is absolutely the only relic of the old family that is left in St. Osyth. The hall is

floored with brick, and the staircase arrangements, though modernised, are very quaint. But the oldest and most interesting part of the house must be sought behind the hall screen, where a huge arch encloses an old-fashioned fireplace, in the rear of which

are the queerest nooks and recesses imaginable. Only a few days before my visit a strange wooden sword had been discovered among the beams of this fireplace, and I incline to think this sword may have done duty at many an old Essex Christmas revel. Here too there is a wide old staircase, the steps of which are formed of solid blocks of oak worn with the tread of centuries. This stair leads to two or three interesting rooms, one of which has a coved ceiling panelled in square compartments with oak mouldings. From an old whitewashed door I obtained the sketch of a good hammered iron door handle which I have converted into the initial letter on p. 123. Upon the same door is a long latch curiously ornamented with a rudely incised pattern.

The St Cleres, whose pedigree may be seen in the Visitation of Essex, held the manor here under the Earls of Oxford as early as 1334, and this tenure continued without a break till 1454. In 1546 we find Sir John St. Clere holding the manor of St. Clere's Hall or Chichridill in St. Osyth of the Earl of Oxford by the third part of a knight's fee. He also held the manor of Frodewick or Frodwick. This Sir John was the Commissioner of the Court of Augmentation and throve mightily on the spoils of the neighbouring priory. Sixteen years later these manors were absorbed into the priory lands by purchase and became the property of the D'Arcys. The St. Cleres as an Essex family then ceased to exist.

CHAPTER VIII.

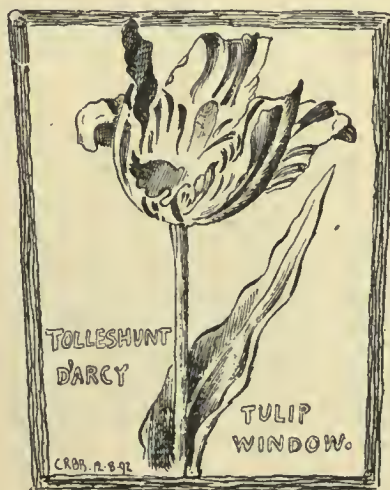


TOLLESHUNT D'ARCY, BECKINGHAM HALL,
HAZELEIGH, AND FAULKBOURNE.

FROM Fingringhoe to Tolleshunt D'Arcy the road is long and dreary, the villages of Abberton, Peldon, and Salcott-cum-Virley containing nothing of interest. True we are in Mehalah land, so the places named have their associations, but these are of a very modern date. Tolleshunt D'Arcy, however, makes amends for the previous blank ground, and the toil of a lengthy walk is amply repaid. Here we have a church that is well worth a visit. Unless I am mistaken the table stone of an altar tomb is to be found at the south door, the remainder being built into the chancel wall at a wrong level. The D'Arcy Chapel would be none the worse for a rather more frequent brushing out, especially as the monuments within it, of the D'Arcy and Boys families, are decidedly of interest. My chief desire in making a pilgrimage to the church was, however, to take a sketch of the "Tulip Window." This fragment of glass, which was discovered outside the church when some restoring work was done, is now placed in the centre of one of the south windows. I should be inclined to put its date as very early indeed in the 17th century,

and it is interesting as being probably the earliest representation of a tulip on glass that now exists. The painting of this flower bears evidence of having been taken from nature, so completely is it removed from the conventional. When we consider that the tulip did not become a popular (though expensive) flower till about 1580, the value of this very early painting will be easily admitted.

Close by the church, and surrounded by a moat, is D'Arcy Hall, to which access is of a bridge, the are decorated with dated 1575: their three cinquefoils gules for differ- like many another not by its present ance give evidence tent, unless ex- is on this account



gained by means gate posts of which the family arms blazon is, Argent, gules, a crescent ence. D'Arcy Hall Essex hall does external appear- of its former ex- amined closely. It that the moderns

sneer at Essex as a county where every farmhouse calls itself a hall. Unfortunately the decay or extinction of ancient families in Essex is the cause of the present comparatively humble appearance of their former mansions. D'Arcy Hall is no exception to this rule. As far back as the reign of Stephen this manor was held by the family of Tregoz and continued with them till the reign of Henry III. Towards the end of the 13th century it formed part of the possessions of Robert de Valoines, who dying without male issue left his estates to his daughters

Roose and Cecily. Whether these ladies married and their husbands fought over the division of the lands, or whether they themselves quarrelled remains doubtful; all we know is that the manor of Tolleshunt D'Arcy was the subject of a lawsuit some time between the years 1282 and 1316, when we find it the property of John de Boys. The De Boys family kept it till 1419, and the tomb of the last male of them (a brass) is even now in D'Arcy Church. John de Boys was connected with the D'Arcy family by marriage, and on the division of his estates the D'Arcys obtained possession of this portion, which they retained until the reign of Charles I., when the male line failed and the Essex estates of this branch of the D'Arcys were divided among five coheiresses. I have before this spoken of the intermarriage of Essex families, and not a few instances could be quoted from the D'Arcy pedigree. The old familiar names crop up again and again, but one particular line in the pedigree is unexampled. It is this: Sir Robert D'Arcy, who was buried A.D. 1402 at Maldon (in the D'Arcy aisle there), married Alice, the daughter and heiress of Henry FitzLangley of Maldon. His family consisted of two sons, John and Robert, and a daughter Eleanor. These married as follows: John married Anne Tirrell, Robert married Elizabeth Tirrell, and Eleanor Sir William Tirrell, all the children of Sir Thomas Tirrell of Heron, Kt. Tolleshunt D'Arcy was originally known by the name of Tolleshunt Tregoz or Trigoss from the first family settled there, the same designation being kept up long after not only the Boys family had departed, but the D'Arcys had been there established. Of the interior of D'Arcy

Hall, two portions claim attention, viz. the present entrance hall and the remains of the screen of the old manorial hall, now a part of the kitchen. The present entrance hall is beautifully decorated with carved oak. The cornice bearers are very handsome, with rare mouldings, and one or two pilasters, evidently relics of the oldest part of the building, are there intermingled with a singularly interesting collection of panels. These panels consist of an upper

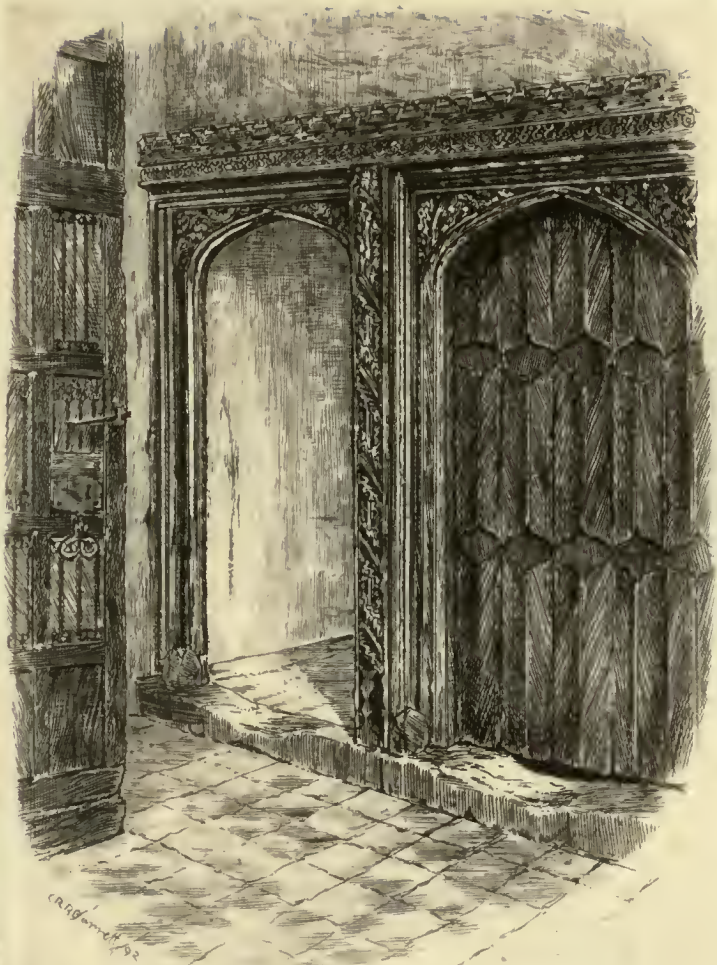


series which I may be perhaps permitted to term a frieze in which all are different in design, and many are quaint. The two which I have selected for sketching purposes are perhaps the most curious. It is not easy to determine whether the mermaid is being swallowed by the dolphin or is being evolved therefrom. The design of the crane and the two children, rude and rough though it be, is certainly uncommon. Among the remaining panels those which represent a knight in armour and a lady are worth notice. Beneath this frieze run

two rows of small linen pattern panels which are unusually elaborate in detail. Next, as if to make a dado cornice, we have a series of long narrow horizontal panels decorated with floral designs of a conventional nature, in the centre of each of which is a shield bearing in some cases the D'Arcy coat, in others A.D. united by a knot or perhaps a single D of quaint form (*vide* Title-page). The dado itself consists of a double row of linen pattern panels of a rather different design. I took a sketch of one of the pilasters, being somewhat struck by the strange mis-shapen head of a jester which appeared on



its central medallion. The remains of the hall screen, which are now to be found in the kitchen of the present dwelling-house, are very interesting. Here we have the double arched doorways with a very handsome crenellated beam surmounting them, carved spandrels of a good type, and above all one original door of a most uncommon type. A somewhat similar pair of doors is to be found at Ufton Court near Aldermaston, where Mrs. Perkins, the "Belinda" of the "Rape of the Lock," passed her married life; but the Ufton doors lead now to the staircase and are in every way inferior to those at D'Arcy Hall.



D'Acy Hall.

The next village to Tolleshunt D'Arcy is known as Tolleshunt Major, or more correctly Malger, seeing that a family of the name of Malger held the manor at the time of the Survey. In the reign of Stephen, however, we find it possessed by a Tregoz, who bestowed it on Coggeshall Abbey. Church property it remained until the time of the Suppression, when it was granted to Sir Thomas Seymour. Sir Thomas exchanged it subsequently with the King for lands elsewhere, and Tolleshunt Major was then granted to Stephen Beckingham. From that time the manor itself, but not the parish, has been known as Beckingham. The Beckinghams retained possession for nearly a century, when they sold the property to a London alderman, Sir Thomas Adams. The Beckinghams, during their ownership, built a very remarkable manor house on the estate, of which only the strange gatehouse and a portion of the turreted garden wall and a very remarkable carving in the farm kitchen now remain. This carving, which displays the family arms with dragon supporters (for which supporters I can find no warrant), bears the date 1546, and must, therefore, have been erected within three years after the Beckinghams obtained the property. Intermingled with conventional flowers, fruit, and foliage are several human heads in medallions, and the motto "Ingratitude est la mort." Without doubt this carving, which is large and very bold in design and execution, originally stood above the mantel beam of the great hall fireplace. The old manor house garden is very



PILASTER,
D'ARCY
HALL.

picturesque, with its quaint turreted walls, in which, at intervals, there are several tiny recesses somewhat resembling sentry boxes, and in the middle of one wall the ruinous little gatehouse. Old-fashioned flowers and shrubs grow in tangled profusion, and a wealth of roses makes a brilliant foreground to the battered relics of the gatehouse behind. One arbour in this garden must have existed for at least two centuries, so thick are the huge stems of the ivy, which not only grows all over it but absolutely sustains



it. The gatehouse in itself is a strange structure; it is built of brick, which in former times has been plaster-faced and decorated with black crosses, but the plaster work has now nearly entirely disappeared. The gateway itself is very small, too small indeed to admit a coach. There was once a single room above the gate, to which access was obtained by a small and narrow stair in the thickness of the wall, a similar stair leading thence to the roof. Unfortunately the roof and the floor have now fallen in, and indeed the whole of the inner face of the gatehouse has

become completely ruinous. The oddly shaped turrets were different back and front; the back pair and one only of the front pair remain. Even in its decay Beckingham is of architectural importance, and for picturesqueness the old manor house garden cannot easily be surpassed. One of my sketches shows the pinnacle which marks the corner of the garden wall, beneath which can be seen one of the sentry boxes of which I have already spoken. Just without the wall, upon the other side of the garden, the remains of the brick pillars of a large gateway are still standing, but as there does not appear to be any plan of the manor house in existence it is very difficult to conjecture in these days where the main entrance could have been; assuredly, however, it was never at the present gatehouse.

Leaving Beckingham I make my way in the direction of Maldon, passing through the village of Goldhanger, and upon the shore side of Mill Beach, a "mill" beach now no longer, for since I sketched the Blackwater River last year the old two-sailed mill has been demolished. Presently I reach Heybridge, devoted to iron works, and rejoicing



TURRET, BECKINGHAM HALL.

in a church with an extremely stumpy tower. Here the objects of interest are but few, still the south door with its fair iron scroll-work and huge lock may well be noticed. Then passing along the stretch of road which intervenes between Heybridge and the Blackwater, and which would be uninteresting were it not for the fine view of the old town of Maldon on the hill beyond, I soon find myself in familiar places, and thankfully tarry for the night.

Hazeleigh, or Haseley as it used formerly to be written, is a small though scattered parish between two and three miles distant from Maldon. Its tiny lath-and-plaster church, which is now in a wretched condition of disrepair, stands but a stone's throw from the old hall, in former days the home of the Essex Alleyns. This church has been styled "the meanest church in Essex," and well it merits the designation. Still, despite the drawbacks, as an old-fashioned place of worship still remaining quite in its Georgian state Hazeleigh Church is worth a visit. The roughly whitewashed walls are rudely decorated with texts of Scripture painted in the crudest of distemper colours. From the outside one may thrust a stick through the wall of the nave into the church, so dilapidated is the entire structure. An old hourglass-stand still projects from the wall close by the crooked and irregularly shaped reading-desk, which is dominated by a distorted pulpit with a skimpy sounding board. There are no attempts at tracery in the windows, common cottage casements being the rule. Upon the south side the floors of the pews slant down some nine inches from the aisle to the south wall. The roof is plastered with roughly hewn timber beams, and a

heavy one which crosses the opening of the archless chancel is so low that a tall man must stoop or smite his head. Naturally the arrangements of the sanctuary are of the meanest description, and indeed any attempt at propriety of furniture or hangings would strike one as incongruous to the last degree. This little church is typical (even down to the imposing array of wooden hat pegs which adorn its walls) of the churches to which our grandparents were accustomed. It is in Essex almost the sole survivor of a once common species, and as such its more than quaint interior is worthy of this somewhat lengthy description. The Hall is separated from the church by a very narrow strip of wood, at the edge of which the moat may still be in part traced. Externally Hazeleigh Hall is by no means an imposing structure, nor upon the ground floor are there any relics of interest. But above the ceiling of the first floor, and to be approached only by means of a climb through a trap door, there yet exist the relics of a once stately room—a “long gallery” on a small scale. Here amid the rafters we have a narrow panelled apartment with recesses once lighted by dormer windows now destroyed. Upon the wall at the end may still be discerned two rudely painted shields, unfortunately now nearly obliterated. Enough however can be made out to show that these are the arms of the Alleyn family, and must date later than 1589, when the shield—or, on a fesse vert three lions rampant of the first—was granted to Giles, the son of Christopher Alleyn and Agnes his wife. This grant was in lieu of “Aleyn’s owld cotte” (Visitation of Essex, 1612).

The old coat was sable, a cross potent or (*vide* Title-page). One or two spaces in the panelling of this very singular chamber are partly filled by old-fashioned balusters which have unfortunately been some time or another closed up by osier trellis work. This room, however, though absolutely unsketchable, I think most decidedly merits description as being indeed a curiosity.

The Alleyn family first appear at Hazeleigh in 1538, when a certain John Alleyn and his brother Christopher married the two co-heiresses Mary or Margaret and Agnes Leigh, the only remaining members of the Leigh family, the former owners. John and Christopher Alleyn were the brothers of Sir John Alleyn, Lord Mayor of London—at that date the fact of two brothers bearing the same name is frequently occurring. These Alleyns were Essex men already as their father belonged to Thaxted, and indeed there was a John Alleyn of Thaxted gentleman in 1536 belonging to the same stock. There is a tradition that Edward Alleyn, the actor and founder of Dulwich College, was a member of this family, but after a good deal of investigation I have been unable to trace any connection therewith, and it must not be assumed from the fact that in the pedigree of the Alleyns two Edwards occur that either of these is the beneficent old player. One of them we know to have been Edward of “Little Leighs in Com. Essex ar.” who married Elizabeth Scott of the same place, the other is his son and heir Edward, also armiger and in no way to be confounded with Edward Alleyn player, who was born either in St. Botolph’s without Bishopsgate, London, or as Fuller has it “near Devonshire House, where now is the

sign of the Pie." Moreover the player's father was Edward Alleyn or Allen, an innholder and porter to the Queen.

From Hazeleigh I pass on to the single arch which is the sole relic of Bicknacre Priory, and which stands stark and solitary in the midst of a field. Bicknacre or Bitacre stands partly in the parish of Woodham Ferrers and partly in that of Danbury. It appears to have been a priory for Black Canons, and to have been founded and endowed by Maurice Fitz-Geffrey, the Sheriff of Essex during the reign of Henry II., and its dedication was to the Virgin Mary and St. John Baptist. The King himself was generous enough to greatly assist the founder by providing funds for the building. But Bicknacre never prospered, and so much had its buildings fallen into decay during the reign of Henry VII., to which must be added a sadly decreased revenue, that the house was within an ace of being deserted by the Black Canons and left to the bats and owls. The prior and monks however of the Elsing Spittle without Bishops-gate in London, seeing that something might possibly be made of Bicknacre, petitioned the King and obtained a grant of the Priory and lands for themselves. Upon the Suppression the lands of course reverted to the Crown and were granted to one Henry Polsted. The single remaining arch is most carefully preserved, owing, it is said, to a tradition which appears founded on custom there, viz. that while it remains the field in which it stands will never pay tithe. I had intended to have paid a visit to Woodham Ferrers Church and also to Edwins Hall, which was built by Archbishop Sandys, but was compelled to abandon my intention; nor could I explore sundry other old halls which are in the immediate neighbour-

hood, but which promised to be no less interesting than others which I had already visited. Still there was nothing of any real importance, and I passed on my way, obtaining glimpses here and there of Danbury with its famed hill, from which the glare of London can clearly be discerned at night. Having returned to Maldon I reached Witham by train, bent upon a special excursion, viz. to Faulkbourne Hall. In 1891 I had been refused permission either to sketch or even to view the place, much to my disappointment. This year however I had heard that the grand old place had a new occupier, and having duly applied for permission my request was most kindly granted.

Faulkbourne Hall, as far as my experience goes, is the most beautiful of all the halls of Essex, and if the ancient windows had been retained it would have been the most perfect. Only one window of any importance however can now be seen, and this I have shown in my pen-and-ink sketch ; its mullions are of brick and it is supported by five curious double coved brackets. The whole situation of this grand old house is most picturesque ; the grounds are well timbered, nay indeed some of the trees are magnificent in size and of great age. Along one side of the house runs a little stream, down to which slopes a pleasant lawn, studded with shady trees, while upon the further side of the stream there is quite a small forest. Front, back, or side views of this country mansion are equally interesting, though my personal predilection led me to select the tower end for my sketches. The chimneys are fine ones, though not a little covered with ivy, and the massive crocketed conical turrets are singularly well worth atten-



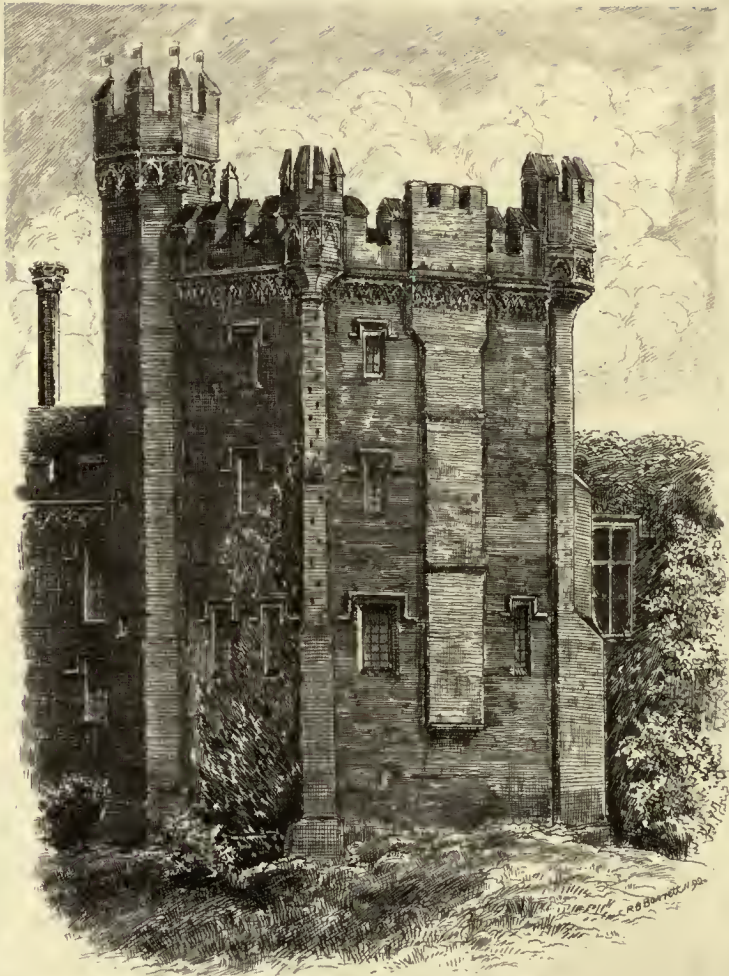
tion. I was kindly permitted to ascend the main tower, and in more than one little window of its fine brick newel I was delighted to meet with the curious quarry which I here give. It evidently represents a peculiar knot badge of one of the former owners, my impression being that it belongs to either the Montgomeries or the For-

at the Conquest became the this much we know, but subsequently owing to the absence of definite relation-



tescues. Faulkbourne manor property of Hamo Dapifer ; much obscurity occurs subsequent repetition of names and the ships. We however find

that Hamo died without issue and that Faulkbourne was part of the dowry of his niece Sibil or Mabil who was married to the illegitimate son of Henry I. by name Robert. Robert had a son William, who sold Faulkbourne to Richard de Lucy, who left it to his son Geoffrey. Geoffrey died childless and his lands were shared between his sisters Maud and Rohaise ; of which the elder possessed Faulkbourne. She was married twice, firstly to Walter Fitz Walter and secondly to Richard de Ripariis or Rivers. She was succeeded by her grandson Richard de Rivers, who being a minor was in the king's ward. The son of Richard de Rivers, by name John, died in 1294 leaving a son who sold Faulkbourne to Sir John Sutton of Wivenhoe. Afterwards it was held by one of the Curzons, who seems in 1364 to have left it to Sir Thomas Mandeville. Sir Thomas died in 1399 leaving a daughter. The next family in possession was that of Montgomery, who first appear in 1411 in the person of Sir John, a K.C.B. . He was a distinguished



Foulkebourne Hall, Wilham.

soldier and died in 1449. Of his two sons, the eldest, John, was beheaded in 1462, being a Lancastrian; the youngest, Sir Thomas, was a K.G. and high in the favour of both Edward IV. and Richard III. Bosworth Field caused a change in his fortunes, though he was not deprived of his possessions. At his death in 1494 he left his property to John Fortescue, and by a fortunate marriage a few years later some more of the original Montgomery property came into the same family. The Fortescues, some of whom were distinguished both as soldiers and lawyers, flourished at Faulkbourne until the end of the 16th century when Faulkbourne was sold to a member of the Bullock family, and by his descendant is still possessed.

Faulkbourne Hall, as will be seen, is mainly Tudor in style, and very ornate Tudor; a few portions are of more ancient date, but those known to exist are now covered over by the Tudor brickwork. The tower itself is in reality Norman and is by tradition stated to have been built as far back as the days of Stephen. But I imagine that there are few who would wish to see this beautiful Tudor house other than it is. For myself, after a fairly wide experience in Tudor houses in various parts of the Kingdom I must admit that I cannot easily name a better example than Faulkbourne. The initial letter of this chapter is derived from the detail brickwork upon the top of one of the turrets of the tower. It may be well compared with the specimen of brickwork from Leighs Priory as it presents several peculiarities.

CHAPTER IX.

RETTENDON, RAYLEIGH, AND ROCHFORD.



RETTENDON is a small and ancient village about nine miles south of Chelmsford, and includes within its limits the hamlet of Battlesbridge. The navigable river Crouch runs through the parish, passing thence between North and South Fambridge till it reaches the sea about six miles below Burnham. On either side of the Crouch for a considerable distance the ground is flat and low ; hence from the top of the hill upon which Rettendon Church stands the view of the boat and barge dotted river is both extensive and in a measure picturesque. We find Rettendon as one of the original possessions of the nunnery of Ely, having been bestowed thereon by the foundress Etheldreda (A.D. 673) ; but when a bishopric was established there four hundred and thirty-five years afterwards, this Essex parish was in some way transferred to the diocese by its conventual owners : church property it remained until the reign of Queen Elizabeth when it was sold. A manor house formerly existed here, but it has been so altered and reduced in size as to contain nothing of interest. The only names of importance which occur in connection with Rettendon are those of Bouchier,

De la Hay, and Sir Henry Saville; the first two named, it would appear, held lands here in the 14th and 15th centuries of the Bishop of Ely. Saville, the founder of the Oxford Professorship of Geometry and Astronomy, obtained by purchase the manor of Little Hayes, and bequeathed it to the University. Little Hayes, Hays, or Lillehais, thus by its name keeps the memory of the old family green. The name of Battlesbridge is by tradition derived from a battle stated to have been fought there in 1016 between the Danish Knut and Edmund Ironside. In this year the celebrated battle of Assandun was fought on the hill now known as Ashingdon and distant from Battlesbridge about five miles as the crow flies. There is no record of any other battle in the neighbourhood at this date, and I cannot but think that the name Battlesbridge originated in some bridge which existed over the river, here quite narrow, and which formed either the means of escape for the fugitives or the limit of the pursuit of the victorious Danes. The story of the battle of Assandun is so familiar that it need not be repeated here.

The church of All Saints, Rettendon, is both ancient and interesting, one or two points within it being particularly well worth notice. It is small in size and consists of a nave, chancel, north aisle, and north chapel; at the west end the tower stands up boldly with an embattled parapet and a conical roof. Some of the internal fittings of the church are very remarkable, especially a series of "poppy heads" which will be found in the chancel. Among these occurs the crest of the Lathoms which is now used by the Stanleys, the eagle and child. The story of this crest is that a certain Sir Thomas Lathom, Kt., of Lathom and Knowesley

in Lancashire, was in his infancy carried off by an eagle, being recovered from its nest unhurt and apparently well cared for. The Knight had an only child, Isabel, who married Sir John Stanley,



STALL, RETTENDON.

K.G., and her husband, with her estates, adopted the Lathom arms and crest. It should be added that the oak tree with acorns has nothing to do with the crest, the blazon being, on a chapeau gules, turned up with ermine, an eagle wings extended or, preying on an infant in its cradle proper, swaddled gules, the cradle laced or. In the "poppy head" at Rettendon the eagle has been lost, its feet only remaining, and the conventional oak tree is used instead of a chapeau. Now the Stanleys cannot be traced as having ever been connected with the parish; hence the

presence of this poppy head is somewhat unaccountable, unless it came thus. It appears that Alice, the daughter of William Tyrell of Rawreth, the next parish, had for her first husband Thomas Lathom of Lancashire. The remainder of the series comprises the "bear and ragged staff," two dogs, a lion, a bear and a dog reguardant, and there is also a very remarkable ape with a most comical grin on its face. On the south wall of the chancel is some panelling which forms a back to the stalls; it consists of fairly executed tracery, in the upper compartment of each panel some device occurring such as fleur-de-lys,



CHANCEL, RETTENDON.

a pomegranate, a quatrefoil, &c. Just in the rear of the "three decker" a portion of a "miserere" will be found converted to other uses. Old tiles, some of which have fleur-de-lys centres, have been utilised to pave the chancel. The sedilia, which have trefoil heads, are small, but the piscina is probably the most remarkable in the county, even that at Great Bardfield not being excepted. Its arch is pointed, but the lower ends of the arch bend inwards till the opening is quite narrow and then bend sharply outwards. The sides of this queer arch are well moulded and a label of dogtooth moulding terminating in roses completes the design. Upon the same wall of the chancel there is an isolated corbel which might well be the near relative of one I have already sketched at Wethersfield and to which I have already made reference. It is however of superior design and greater antiquity, the clever way in which the pendant stone knot is tied being highly artistic.



Above it is a brass to Margaret Hayes, 1552. In the floor on the other side of the chancel there is a large grey marble slab of which the edge is adorned with a singular running pattern. Evidently this slab once formed the table of an altar tomb, and it is much to be regretted that the sides are no longer preserved, for if decorated at all to correspond with the edge of the slab, the tomb must have been singularly uncommon in treatment. There is also a brass to a man, his two wives, and seven children, of which the inscription is lost. Of the huge marble monument at the east end of the north aisle I need say nothing here, save that it is the memorial of a certain Edmund Humphry who died in 1727, the last of his race.

Descending Rettendon Hill I cross the river in the valley, passing the quaint old mill there, now bright in the afternoon sun, and make my way towards Rayleigh. The church tower, mill, castle mound, and village extended along the hill crest in the distance. The walk is not very interesting, and with the exception of a curious tumble-down old weather-boarded farm house now divided into cottages, standing within a large and perfect moat upon the right hand side of the road, there is nothing for which to delay my walk. Somehow a moat always fascinates me and I find myself wandering round this one and wondering what this evidently old manor house looked like before its day of ruin. Level with the ground are all its out-buildings, for now rafters, broken tiles, and splinters of wood in admired confusion mark the place where the barn and granary once stood. But what gardens these old moated enclosures make! Everything seems to grow therein most luxuriously.

This spot is in Rawreth, which parish adjoins Rettendon at Battlesbridge. While hunting for information in the State Papers, I found a document dated from Rawreth which, as it bears upon the persecutions of Thomas Hooker the nonconformist, about whom I have already written (see page 61), may be properly mentioned. Under date November 3, 1629, Dr. John Browning writes from Rawreth to Bishop Laud, at his house near St. Paul's Church. Mr. Hooker, he says, who was lately in question before the Bishop, still continues his former practices. Dr. Browning begs the help of the Bishop's authority, if not to the suppressing and rooting out of such a one,

at least to the defending of those who live in obedience. The "renowned" Bishop of Winchester (Andrews) stated to the writer that "one Mr. Hooker" was silenced in his diocese on the complaint of King James, and he begs Bishop Laud to consider whether this be the same man or no. The people in this district of Essex, he continues, being over-much addicted to "hearing the word" as "they call it," to the neglect of God's services and worship, will "feel great heart-burnings arise against the suppressors of this man and his lecture." Dr. Browning finally offers his service for quieting the people on Hooker's removal.

From Rawreth to Rayleigh I quickly pass, and soon the old castle mound and embankment begins to take far more definite shape. Rayleigh is a small town upon the top of a hill, and consists of one long wide street, at the east end of which stands the church. The church is not interesting as a building, though it has a fair south porch, of which the ornamented Tudor parapet is quite lost beneath a thick coating of ivy. Within, the chancel aisles are separated from the nave by timber arches of which the curiosity and comparative rarity is the sole charm. There is an altar tomb which seems of fourteenth century date in the south chapel, and one brass still remains in the church, but the names of the persons commemorated are in both cases unknown. Rayleigh (I shall not enumerate the eight or nine different ways of spelling the name of this place) was a place of great importance in the days, it is said, of Suene, being in fact his stronghold, and to the remains of this stronghold, merely earthworks, the name of Rayleigh

Castle is applied. These earthworks consist of a central mound (the base of which is elliptical) surrounded by a ditch and a rampart which are enclosed by a second ditch. The ramparts have suffered not a little as it is, and passages have been pierced through them. Whether in ancient days these formidable banks were fortified by masonry or merely by timber stockades does not now appear on the surface, nor would any good purpose be served by excavation. Certain it is that in Rayleigh itself no tradition has been handed down of the date (if any) of the demolition of its castle. The place



has neither history nor legend, except, of course, the usual story of a subterranean passage leading to some impossible place.

From Rayleigh to Rochford there is little of interest; I might have deviated slightly from my path to visit the scene of the battle of "Assundun," but refrained. The church at Ashingdon no longer contains the miraculous image for which it was once so celebrated that crowds daily visited the shrine, crawling up the hill upon their knees. The powers of the saint were specially exercised in favour of barren women, and it is curious to note that ages after the image had disappeared it was considered

lucky to get married at Ashingdon Church. As far as can be ascertained a rector of the parish by name David, who had been presented to the living by Sir William de Coggeshall, son-in-law of Sir John Hawkwood, first discovered the virtues of this image. Making the fact known, not a little wealth accrued to him from the offerings of the faithful, so much so that the fees of the neighbouring clergy fell off considerably. Complaint was therefore made to the Bishop of London, Robert de Braybroke, who in 1401 granted a commission to the "official of the Archdeacon of Essex, and to the Vicar of Prittlewell to go to this church and search into the form and quality of this image," &c. But their report upon this weighty and important expedition is not forthcoming.

Rochford as a town cannot boast of any architectural points of interest in its straggling street and irregular market square. To find indeed anything picturesque or historically interesting it will be needful to walk out beyond the railway where stands the curious church with the remains of the historic Rochford Hall close beside it. I must not omit to mention the odd custom which for many generations survived in the place and which even survived its removal here from the neighbouring parish of Rayleigh some 240 years ago. I allude to the "Lawless Court." According to tradition the custom arose from a conspiracy against the Lord of the Manor which was detected, he himself overhearing the plotters while on his way homewards. As a punishment or perhaps as a reminder he ordered that all tenants on his manor should assemble at the same spot upon the same night and there do homage for their tenancies. But it is strange to

find that formerly there were two Lawless Courts, the Great and the Little, the separate existence of the latter being, it would seem, merged in that of the former.

The Little Lawless Court was held on Rope Monday in Hock or Hoke-tide, a season of the year when many curious customs municipal and otherwise were formerly kept up, the Hock-tide procession with the tenure horn at Hungerford being, I am glad to say, still observed. The Great Lawless Court was formerly held at King's Hill in Rayleigh, but through the commandment of



the second Earl of Warwick (Rich), "who would have it so," the scene of the meeting was transferred to Rochford. Here a field has been named King's Hill, and a post is there erected which is a copy of the original post. My sketch shows the site of Rochford Lawless Court.

The Great Lawless Court held its meeting at cockcrow upon the Wednesday morning next after Michaelmas Day. To the post after a supper the tenants and steward went without lanthorns but accompanied by a torch-bearer. The tenants were called over

and answered to their names in a whisper, paying in silence whatever they had to pay. In lieu of pen and ink a coal was used for the purpose of writing. It would appear that the title Lawless arose either from the unlawful hour at which the meeting was held, or from the beginning of the Court Roll, which ran as follows :—

“Curia de Domino Rege
Dicta sine Lege
Tenta est ibidem
Per ejusdem consuetudinem,” &c.

When the custom was last observed there were fourteen lands that paid quit rents to the Lord of the Manor, twelve of these being manors, but I have been given to understand that for two or three years the custom has been allowed to fall into desuetude. In modern times a good deal of cock-crowing and lanthorn-carrying was introduced into the procession, which was contrary to the original spirit of the court, and the whole ceremony partook rather of the nature of a joke; but there is no doubt that in its original intention the Lawless Court was seriously meant, and indeed the heavy fines imposed on absent tenants sufficiently prove this. It has been supposed that the Lawless Court was unique. This cannot be maintained as a similar court existed at Epping known as the manor of Epping Presbyter, and it was held beneath a maple tree between Eppingbury and the Church. Camden says that a similar custom obtained at Placentia in Italy; there are moreover traces of several other now disused open-air courts in various parts of the world.

Rochford Church, which is dedicated to St. Andrew, has a fine brick tower, dating from the reign of Henry VII., which was probably built by Thomas Boteler, Earl of Ormond. Tradition has ascribed this tower to Lord Rich, but the arms of Boteler are carved in stone above the west door. The church inside cannot be said to be at all striking, and there is in fact but little to interest one either in carving, brasses, tombs, or glass. One doorway, leading into the vestry or sacristy, is rather handsome, and there are the relics of a squint or hagioscope. The sacristy itself is a strange building when seen from without, being double-roofed, and with two projecting gable ends at right angles to the chancel. It bears the same date as the tower, and though curious is certainly not to be held up as a model of ecclesiastical style. A very long and interesting list of the heraldic glass formerly in Rochford Church is in existence, but one may look in vain now for even a fragment thereof; not one scutcheon remains out of more than forty,—only a few years since the last was lost! Perhaps the best view of the church of Rochford is to be obtained from the railway station platform, for there the few fine old trees which yet remain just without the graveyard are seen to advantage and form a fitting setting for the irregularly shaped church. By the way it is curious to note that in the old days Rochford Church was much used for the purpose of storing smuggled goods, and the tower was a favourite place of concealment; but a certain secret hollow beneath the pulpit was known only to the few, and used for specially valuable portions of the cargo.

Rochford Hall, which stands close by the west end of the

church, is an interesting but still a disappointing place. One cannot help being interested in a place which has so many associations with the county magnates of days now gone. One would fain attempt to puzzle out the original size and shape of this wrecked mansion; but the task is a vain one,—to such an extent have fire, decay, and demolition played havoc with Rochford Hall. Authorities differ as to the date when the place was built, but I think it may be fairly considered to be a



Boteler manor house to which some additions were made by the Bullens in the reign of Henry VIII. and which was added to and finally turned into a huge palace by Lord Rich, who died there in the year 1566. In the days of the Botelers there are traditions of a great fire, caused, it is said, by an accident to the hangings of the chapel altar. Rather more than a century and a quarter ago another conflagration took place which destroyed a great deal of the building. For some time Rochford Hall was

desolate, but eventually a certain amount of work was done there which rendered the place habitable; but unfortunately in the doing of this, new windows were put in and the red brickwork of the front was smeared with objectionable plaster. The place has for some years now been used as a farm house, and within there is absolutely not one vestige of carving or ornamentation to connect it with any of the distinguished families who have been its possessors. But the old Hall has a ghostly air about it, and even



more so than most decayed mansions; not that there is any suggestion now of supernatural visitors, though many years ago the Rochford Hall ghost caused quite a sensation in the country far and wide. I wandered about through the long empty passages, up and down the winding stairways, seeking traces of antiquity and finding none. Not even do the little turret chambers reward our search. Still, the memory of the hapless Anne Bullen clings to the place, though she was not born there, nor indeed did she live there for any length of time (local tradition

notwithstanding). Fragmentary the whole place now is, with little bits of old work appearing behind sheds and fences. The subject of my sketch is supposed to be possibly the gatehouse, but in the face of so small an archway the supposition must be dismissed. A little courtyard is now entered through the farmer's kitchen, and here within we find another small turret, evidently a stairway, leading to the rooms on the north front. This front, which I endeavoured to sketch in the fast waning evening light, still possesses its quaint row of gables and tall chimneys. At the far end is the turret which is shewn in my first sketch, and near in the foreground are the ruins of another turret, which is now used as a receptacle for rubbish. Where the chapel was, or where the great hall, none can now tell, so completely have all traces of them vanished.



CHAPTER X.

INGATESTONE AND WRITTLE.



INGATESTONE is situated upon the Roman road from Colchester to London, about seven miles south-west of Chelmsford. Probably the name originated in a Roman milestone, for the variations Ging and Yng ad Petram, Gynge-at-Stone, point in this direction. There are also Ging Abbess, Ginge Abbots, and in the 1612 *Visitation of Essex* the spelling is twisted into Engerston. The church and manor here once formed a portion of the possessions of the Abbey and Convent of Barking, and a record of an annual payment of xlviis. to the Cellaress of that aristocratic nunnery gives an idea of the value of the estate. With the Suppression came of course a change of owners, and the manor passed into the possession of Sir William Petre, in whose family it still remains. Sir William, who was descended from an old Devonshire family, was the founder of the Petrean fellowships at Oxford. He was a secretary to Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, built the interesting old hall at Ingatestone in 1565, died there in 1572, and was buried in the parish church.

The tombs and monuments (to the Petre family) in the parish church are interesting, and the brick tower is good. One relic of church furniture too should not be overlooked; I refer to the hour-glass stand, which is still fixed to the wall, near the place formerly occupied by the pulpit. The church consists of a chancel with both north and south chapels, a nave with a south aisle and porch, the north porch apparently having been destroyed. Built of brick in the 15th century the tower is a very noble piece of work, being bold in design and fine in proportion. One peculiarity will be noted—viz., that the windows upon its east and west faces are two-light, while those upon the north and south are single. The brick mouldings of the west door are good, though plain, but possibly the greatest effect in the whole west front is produced by the patterns in vitrified brick which ornament the faces of the buttresses and the central portion of the tower wall. The Petre chapels—for there is more than one—occupy the chancel chapel, and aisle, and the north chapel. Here lie the founder of the greatness of the family, Sir William Petre, and Ann, his second wife, the daughter of William Browne, Lord Mayor of London. His monument takes the form of a handsome altar tomb, standing between the chancel and the south chapel. Another tomb is that of John, first Lord Petre, of Writtle, who married Mary, the daughter of Sir Edward Waldegrave. As is well known, the Petre family have adhered consistently to the Catholic faith, the present peer being himself an ecclesiastic. In the reign of Queen Mary, when the restoration of church property seemed not improbable, Sir William Petre obtained a Bull from the Pope

Paul IV., confirming him in various church properties which had been granted to him at the time of the Suppression. It is stated that by agreement a certain proportion of these estates were to be devoted to spiritual uses, an engagement which was duly observed—witness the Ingatestone almshouses in the present day. The village itself, though bearing a few traces of antiquity in its quiet street, has nothing of architectural interest excepting the parge-work panel which adorns the front of one of the houses, and which I have introduced as the initial letter of this chapter.

Ingatestone Hall, which stands upon the south-east side of the church, about half a mile away beyond the railway, is a retired and peaceful-looking place. It is approached by a quaint-looking archway, of which the merit lies in its colour rather than in any architectural beauty it possesses. Upon the left-hand are outbuildings of brilliant red brick, in which the openings of small Tudor windows are visible, and of which the crow-stepped gable end and sturdy buttress are literally alive with tame pigeons. To this add a background of lofty elm trees, relics of the now vanished park, and the view is complete. Of the quadrangle, in which shape the hall was originally built a considerable portion is now left, embracing nearly three parts of the old structure. The principal front was demolished during the 18th century, when the place ceased to be the chief residence of the family. To-day the central portion of the building is fitted up as a Catholic chapel, and to this central portion an addition has been made for the purpose of enlargement. The remainder of the hall is divided into various private houses which are inhabited by

Catholic families and the resident priest of this little community. I am glad to state that some antique 15th and 16th century tapestry belonging to the house, together with various carvings, heraldic glass, paintings, and a little furniture, are preserved in their proper home. This is as it should be. As will be seen from my sketch,



INGATESTONE HALL.

the corner of the courtyard is occupied by an octagonal ivy-clad stair turret which leads to the upper rooms. I was given to understand that in an upper room at the back of this turret on the south side a priest's hiding place was discovered nearly forty years ago. It communicated by means of a ladder with one of the chief bedrooms, and contained a packing case directed to the Right Honourable

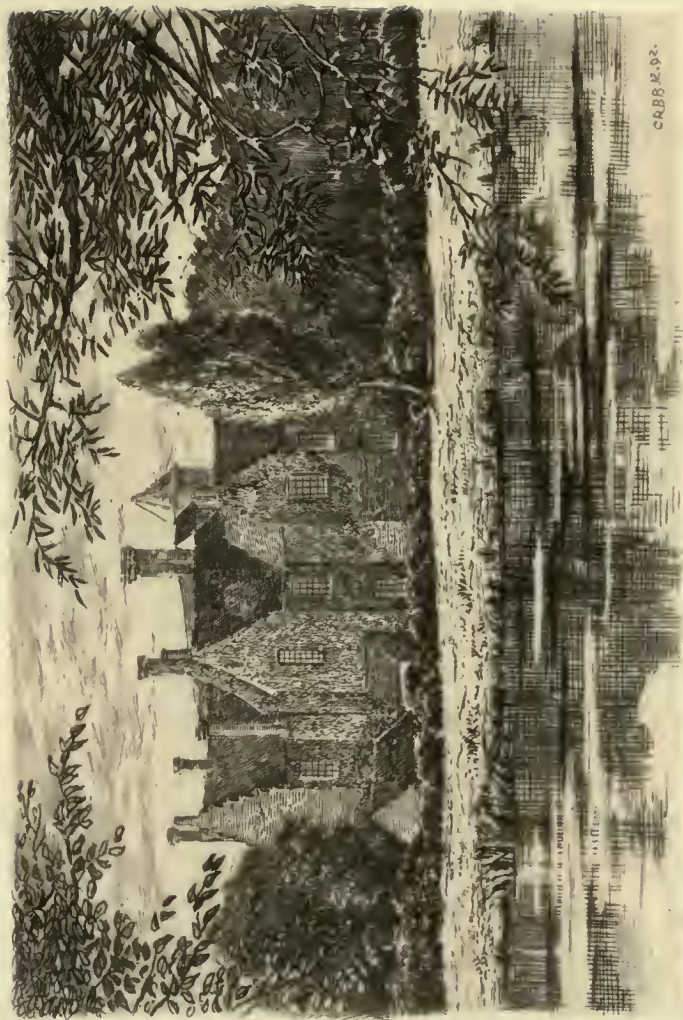
the Lady Petre. This place of concealment is fourteen feet long, two feet wide, and ten feet high. Upon the floor was a layer of several inches of dry sand, evidently intended to act as a muffler of sound. A chest for the safe keeping of the sacred vessels and vestments was also discovered at the same time, which bore the



THE LINE WALK.

appearance of considerable antiquity. It was strongly banded with iron, and had two curious locks and a padlock hasp. But interesting though the picturesque old Hall is in front, to my mind the most beautiful view is that which is obtained from the extreme end of the remains of the moat. This spot is reached by passing down the long narrow avenue of slender lime trees which runs by the edge of this water. Readers of novels will remember the lime avenue in *Lady Audley's Secret*: Ingatstone Hall is the spot described. From the end of this walk, with lime on one hand and willow on the other, the irregular and partly ivy-clad gables and chimneys of the hall appear to the greatest

advantage—a double picture too, for in the smooth clear surface of the water every detail is reflected. It is one of those spots which do not easily lend themselves to description; it may be seen and admired, but the very simplicity of its quiet beauty renders it difficult to express on paper. My inspection of the Hall and



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Ingatstone Hall.

grounds being over, I passed out beneath the wide brick arch of the gatehouse—a gatehouse on which I read the appropriate Petre motto, “Sans Dieu Rien,” and took my way towards Writtle.

I had heard that in a very out-of-the-way part of the large and straggling parish of Writtle a small ruined hermitage was to be found. This hermitage was formerly called Bedeman's-Berg, but now, I understand, is known by the name of Monk Barrows. For several hours I wandered about in search of this place, but without success. In Ingatestone nobody seemed to know it. Along the road its existence could not be ascertained, and at Writtle itself I was informed that nothing of the kind had ever been heard of in that part of the country. Now I had met one Essex man at least who had visited the spot, and to him I subsequently repaired for instructions. It turned out that an entry “four miles N.E. from the church” should have been “four miles S.W.” My friend, however, comforted me by the assurance that Bedeman's-Berg in its present fragmentary state would furnish no subject for pen or needle. Writtle once possessed a palace, said to have been built by King John, but of this nothing but the moat remains. The village itself lies round a very large green, and has a somewhat curious appearance, but the houses upon closer examination do not, save in one instance, require notice. There was, however, a group of cottages which edge the path to the church, worth sketching, and accordingly I somewhat hastily possessed myself of the view which I have here reproduced. Writtle Church is a large building, of which parts are evidently Norman and others early English; but much

restoration has been here employed, so that it becomes difficult to exactly discriminate between the patches. The woodwork within is not by any means bad, the roof carving being a fair specimen of Tudor work, and a few bench ends deserving study. The brasses and monuments are of moderate merit.

In ancient days there existed a curious custom known as *Leppe and Lasse*, which was as follows,—any cart which passed over a part of the manor called *Greenbury*, unless it was the cart



of a nobleman, was compelled to pay a tax of 4*d.* to the lord of the manor. The origin of this custom is unknown, though it has been suggested that *Greenbury* was anciently a place of market, and had this privilege. The meaning of *Leppe* and *Lasse* is doubtful, but possibly the first signifies a basket, and the second a load. Another *Writtle* custom was that of *Frampole Fence*. By this custom, where the fences of manorial tenants adjoined the lord's demesnes, the tenant was entitled to use the wood growing in the fence, and as many trees or poles as he could reach from the top of

the fence with the helve of his axe, toward the repair of his side of the fence. The derivation of Frampole is also dubious, but either the Saxon fremful=profitable or franc-pole seems reasonable,—it is a matter, however, for philologists. Child-wit also existed at Writtle, by which the reputed father of a base child gotten within the manor had to pay to the lord a fine of 3s. 4d., in those days a very heavy imposition. The lord of the manor here also exacted Green Silver—a fine of a halfpenny—from all tenants whose front doors opened on to Greenbury.

CHAPTER XI.

CHIPPING ONGAR, GREENSTED, AND CHIGWELL.

CHIPPING ONGAR is situated upon the river Roding, about one and twenty miles from London. Although of undoubted antiquity, as its very name suggests, yet in the streets and houses there are few visible evidences of age. In fact there is little beyond a few gables, destitute of ornamentation, and some carved brackets on a house near the church. Ongar Church, though not architecturally beautiful, is nevertheless an interesting structure. It is dedicated to St. Martin, and is assuredly of considerable antiquity, to judge by the Norman work in doors, windows and slits. Here, as in many other Essex churches, bricks and tiles of Roman type are to be found built into the walls, and there is good reason to consider them genuine, from the fact that a veritable Roman building, once existed in the church-yard. Not long since, while the chancel was under restoration, a singular anchorite's cell was discovered, constructed within the thickness of the north wall. A very small window from this cell looks into the chancel, commanding a view of the high altar, while in the outside of the wall there is a small door. The diminutive size of several windows

in the church is very marked, and would lead one to conclude that safety here was the primary intention of the builder. Of tombs and monuments there is a singular lack, but there is one slab of some interest. It is that of Jane Cromwell, the daughter of Sir Oliver Cromwell, K.C.B., of Hinchinbroke, Hunts, and the aunt of the Protector. Jane Cromwell married Tobias Pallavicini, and died in 1637, aged 42. Her father, it will be remembered, through money troubles was forced to part with Hinchinbroke. Only a few yards from the corner of the church-yard stands a gabled house of respectable antiquity, which is known as the Castle-farm. It is within the outer moat of Ongar Castle, and may possibly contain, in its walls, some portion of the Castle buildings; at any rate there is a local tradition to this effect. At Ongar the arrangement of the Castle moats and defences was the same as at Rickling, only upon a large instead of a small scale. The main body of the buildings stood within the outer moat, while the keep was erected upon a lofty mound, round which a special moat was dug. Of the keep no traces now remain, and the building is known to have been destroyed by the owner, William Morice, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. In place of the demolished keep, he erected on the mound a tower or brick building three stories in height. In 1744 this building was pulled down, and a so-called summer-house was constructed on the summit of the mound. The summer-house soon fell to ruin, but the mound, overgrown with a tangle of trees, bushes and underwood, yet remains surrounded by the deep and dark moat. Round the outer edge

of the outer moat remains of earthworks still exist, and in one spot where possibly the postern door or sallyport used to be, a few traces of masonry can be discerned; but the earthworks are much overgrown, and in consequence it is not easy to investigate their outer side. Ongar Castle was built by Richard de Lucy, who was Sheriff of Essex and Hertfordshire in 1156. Six years later he was appointed Justiciar, and subsequently acted as Lieutenant of the Kingdom, while Henry II. was absent in Normandy. As far as can be ascertained, the Castle at Ongar was connected with no historical events; and from the fact that the keep was ruinous as early as the reign of Elizabeth it may be inferred that the place had long been disused. Nor in the list of the owners of the Castle, after the builder thereof, does any man of note appear. Of the curious manorial customs, that of Ward-Staff, which formerly existed in the Hundred of Ongar, is perhaps the most remarkable. A full account of the quaint ceremonies is to be found in Mr. Charnock's paper (the length of which precludes quotation) on this curious subject.

Separated from Chipping Ongar by the river Roding stands the village of High Ongar. Here I tarried no longer than to look at the fine Norman South door of the church. This doorway is remarkable for its elaborate ornamentation. Of early date, its many mouldings are carved in many distinct patterns, which to the casual observer would perhaps suggest the idea that the whole was a patchwork. This, however, is not the case, and the south door of High Ongar Church is decidedly worth seeing. It was to a house in this parish called Astelyns that the

unfortunate Thomas, Duke of Norfolk, fled when, in the reign of Elizabeth, he was accused of treason. It was from Kenninghall in Norfolk, and not from Astelyns in Essex, that the Duke penned the apologetic letter to the Queen, dated September 24, 1569. His arrest took place on his return to the Court eight days afterwards, and he was not released from the Tower until the following August, being only permitted to reside in his own house in the Charterhouse. Norfolk was never afterwards away from London, being brought to trial on January 16, 1572, and executed on the 2nd of June in the same year.

Returning to Chipping Ongar, I make my way towards the ancient timber church of Greensted. The path leads across a narrow brook, and then between a long avenue of trees which extends the whole way from the brook to the church, a distance of nearly a mile. Before, however, the church is visible, I get a view of Greensted Hall, a house which has the appearance of having been almost rebuilt in modern times. The nave of the ancient church of St. Andrew, Greensted-juxta-Ongar, about which so much has been written and so much has been said, is an eminently curious structure. Its general features are so well known, and it has been so often illustrated, that I preferred to take a sketch of a single log from its north side, rather than to add to the already numerous views of the entire church. The tradition has ever been that the nave was the veritable chapel at Aungre in which the body of St. Edmond rested in 1013, while being conveyed with all pomp and ceremony from London to St. Edmondsbury. Now that timber churches existed in ancient times we are well assured, and indeed there is, or was, one of 12th century date

at Hitterdall, in Lower Tellemark. The authority of the Venerable Bede is quoted for a statement that "there was a time when there was not a stone church in all the land, but the custom was to build them all of wood." Holy Island, York, Athelney, Salisbury, and Glastonbury, are all stated to have originated in log or plank chapels or churches, which in later times were replaced by stone. The vaulting of the roof of the chapel at Montacute, in Somersetshire, was,



at the time of its erection, the subject of great remark, and the date was not very early (Henry I.). But to return to the church itself, its nave is, as I have said, of timber, and may be accepted as Saxon as far as its walls are concerned. These walls are formed of logs, from which a portion has been split, and which are set into a sill, the upper ends being shaved off and apparently let into a groove. The round portion of the logs is on the outside of the church, and consequently the inner wall is smooth. A modern porch exists on the south side, and three rotten timbers on the north tell the tale of a doorway, now blocked on that side. Authorities differ as to whether these timbers are oak or chestnut; whatever they are they have stood the test of wind and weather in the most satisfactory manner. The curicus niche in the lower part of the beam which I sketched attracted my attention. It evidently pierces the wood entirely, and I am at a loss to account for its presence or intention. Upon hunting through all the available prints and accounts of Greensted Church, I have hitherto been quite unable to obtain any clue.

This niche will be found upon the north side of the church, and were it higher up might possibly have been a primitive window ; as it is, however, its position, only four inches above the sill, precludes such a method of solving the difficulty. The roof of the nave is new, and so are the dormer windows ; the chancel, which was built of birch in Tudor times, contains nothing remarkable, except a curious pillar piscina in one corner. I was informed that an ancient fifteenth century panel was preserved in the church, but somehow, in my interest over the timber nave, I managed to forget to inspect it. From the many drawings which exist of Greensted Church, the mean plank tower and spire will be so well known that I need not comment on them.

The road from Chipping Ongar to Chigwell does not present many features of interest. On the right hand we have Stanford Rivers, a thinly inhabited parish, noteworthy as having been the residence of the Rev. Isaac Taylor (second of the name) and his sister Jane, both writers of some celebrity in their day. Farther on, upon the same side of the road, we have Theydon Mount, in which parish stands Hill Hall, the former seat of the Smijth family. Hill Hall is still in their possession, but the present baronet resides in another county. It will be remembered that Sir Thomas Smijth, Kt., was a Saffron Walden man, who flourished in the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary and Elizabeth, filling the office of Secretary of State under Edward VI. and his Protestant sister. His munificent benefactions to his native town are yet enjoyed there ; and his literary works, chiefly composed while in the shade of Court disfavour and semi-persecution during the reign of Mary, are still of repute.

The village of Lambourne, upon the left hand side of the road, possesses a fair little Norman church, which has an interesting north door. Within the church is a window containing some panes of curious German 17th century painted glass, the subjects representing a number of events in sacred history. Upon the outskirts of this parish at Lambourne End is a small tract of the once celebrated Hainault Forest, in fact the only relic of this once widely extending hunting ground.

The road from Chipping Ongar for its entire length runs in close contiguity to the river Roding, and in not a few places the views upon this pretty little stream are attractive, particularly between Chigwell and Chigwell Lane Station, where from the bridge the stream appears fringed with willow trees of considerable growth, and with its banks edged with a tangle of rushes and reeds. A little backwater here—how formed it is difficult to say—runs back a short distance into the meadow. Through the trees we have the bright level verdure of the meadows, with well-timbered hedge-rows here and there, and in the distance the low, swelling, tree-clad hills. But at Chigwell the nearness to London is manifest, for barbed wire fences appear, and notices that trespassers will be prosecuted on many a trunk abound, but do not adorn. Chigwell village is in these days chiefly celebrated as being the spot described by Dickens in *Barnaby Rudge*. The inn which figures in that story under the sign of the Maypole is in reality the King's Head, though the sign of the Maypole is also to be found in the village at Chigwell Row. The King's Head is a fine old house,



The River Roding.

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mutilated no doubt, and deprived of not a little of the carving which once decorated its many-gabled exterior. Still, as will be seen by the sketch, there is plenty left to admire on the outside; and the old "large room" on the first-floor, known as the Chester Room, is a really handsome apartment. The panelling is fair and in good condition, and the fireplace of a type which is quite good of its kind. Old recesses in more than one room are of later date, but are quite in character with the general style of



this old-world hostelry. Nearly opposite to the King's Head and quite close to the Parish Church stands the Grammar School. This was founded in 1629 by Samuel Harsnett, Archbishop of York, an Essex worthy, of whom a brief notice should here be given. Samuel Harsnett, was born in the parish of St. Botolph's, Colchester, in 1561, and was the son of a baker. At the age of fifteen he was admitted a sizar of King's College, Cambridge, but removed thence to Pembroke Hall, where he obtained a scholarship.

Harsnett, who became a fellow of his college, took holy orders in 1583, and in the following year preached a sermon at St. Paul's Cross against Predestination, which brought him under the censure of Whitgift. In 1587 he was appointed master of the Free Grammar School in his native town, but resigned the following year, abandoning "the painfull trade of teaching." Harsnett sat on the commission which condemned Darrell for exorcising devils, and wrote a celebrated treatise on witchcraft (published in 1599). In 1597 he became vicar of Chigwell, and in the next year prebendary of Mapesbury, in St. Paul's Cathedral. Harsnett was chaplain to Bancroft, the Bishop of London, and as such acted as licenser of books for the press. To do an old friend a favour he licensed without reading it the manuscript of "The First Part of the Life and Raigne of King Henry IIII." The work being construed as treasonable, the author, Sir John Hayward, was sent to the Tower. Harsnett was threatened with a like fate, but managed to convince the authorities of his innocence. His letter of exculpation and his petition to Coke are wanting in manliness,—“My poor estate, credit, self, and more than myself, hang upon your gracious countenance,” etc “Consider my mean condition, that I am only a poor divine, unacquainted with books and arguments of State,” etc. The most serious ground of offence was Hayward's fulsome dedication to the Earl of Essex, a dedication which was “foisted” into the book without being seen by Harsnett. However, in 1602-3, Harsnett was made Archdeacon of Essex; and was employed by the Privy Council to write a

pamphlet against the Catholics ("A Declaration of Popish Impostures"). It is curious to note that from this pamphlet Shakespeare derived the names of the spirits mentioned in *King Lear*. Milton also is supposed to have made use of it in *L'Allegro*. Three years later Harsnett, who, besides Chigwell, held the living of St. Margaret, Fish Street Hill, resigned the latter, and accepted the rectory of Shenfield. In 1605 he was elected Master of Pembroke Hall, and became Vice-Chancellor the next year. Several exchanges took place in his ecclesiastical preferments, and in 1609 he was made Bishop of Chichester. Meanwhile Pembroke Hall under his management, or mismanagement, had got into financial difficulties, and Harsnett talked of resigning his mastership, but did not do so. In 1616 the fellows presented an indictment against Harsnett of fifty-seven articles to the King, the upshot of which was that the Bishop resigned the mastership. But this did him no harm at Court, for in June, 1619, he was translated to Norwich, which see he appears to have ruled with a rod of iron; as a High Churchman, being especially harsh in his dealings with Puritans and Nonconformists. In 1624 he was charged with Popery and extortion, but managed to clear himself of the charge. Four years later he was made Archbishop of York, and a year later a Privy Councillor. As a thank-offering for his Archbishopric he founded the Grammar School at Chigwell. The statutes of the school are very quaint, but two brief extracts will suffice for quotation. The Latin master was to be "a good poet, of a sound religion, neither Puritan nor Papist, of a grave behaviour, of a sober and honest

conversation, no tippler nor haunter of ale-houses" (alas for the King's Head opposite if then an inn !); "no puffer of tobacco; and, above all, that he be apt to teach and strict in his government." If the Latin master became a deacon, "his place to become void *ipso facto*, as if he were dead." Another ordinance is as follows, "I constitute and ordain, that the schoolmasters do not exceed in their corrections above the number of three stripes with the rod at any one time; that they strike not any scholar upon the head, or the cheek with their fists, or the palms of their hands, or with any other thing, upon pain of loss of forty shillings for every such stripe or stroke, to be defaulted by the governors out of their yearly wages" (the dignity of the profession is here indicated evidently); "that they do not curse or revile their scholars; that for speaking English in the Latin school, the scholar be corrected with the ferula, and for swearing, with the rod," etc. Archbishop Harsnett died in 1631, evidencing in the letters of his later years much bitterness at the rise of the Puritan party. "The Church is infested with the men of Dan and Bethel, whose hearts are over seas. . . . I wish that their hearts and bodies were confined together," he writes in 1629 to Lord President Conway. And again, in the next year in an epistle to Sir Henry Vane, Ambassador to Holland, he gives vent to the following: "The gallant ancient composition of our glorious State is much declined, and is like a body without sinews. How the vital spirit should be restored, *hic labor, hoc opus est*. We are consumed, we do consume, and we have but one true Æsculapius (God bless him!) that takes care of the

common. For their gracious Josiah's sake, he hopes God will relieve them," etc. (Cal. State Papers). In Chigwell Church, where the Archbishop was buried at his special desire, there is a fine brass to his memory, now on the chancel wall, which has the peculiarity of being the latest known example of a brass of a fully vested effigy of a bishop, cope, alb, dalmatic, and stole, being all represented. Harsnett left a valuable theological library to the Corporation of Colchester, his native town. This library is preserved in the Castle at Colchester, and has recently been well catalogued by Mr. Gordon Goodwin.

At Chigwell the Ward-staff was in former times presented to the landowners of Loughborough, etc., and the Watch was kept at the Cross, against the Church, but at Lambourn Manor the service was performed by carrying a load of straw in a cart with six horses, two ropes, two men "in harness," and watching the said Ward-staff when brought into the town of Aibridge (Abridge, a hamlet of Lambourn). It may also be remarked, that the ceremony began at Abbas Roothing, at one extremity of the Hundred, went on to Chigwell at the other, and then returned to High Laver, near its starting point, Ruckwood Hall. Finally, the staff was carried through Essex as far as a place called "Atte Wode," where it was thrown into the sea.

CHAPTER XII.

WALTHAM HOLY CROSS, ROYDON, AND HARLOW.



WALTHAM HOLY CROSS, otherwise known as Waltham Abbey, is a grievous spectacle to the eyes of lovers of antiquity. Admittedly the abbey church is a fine fragment, carefully preserved ; but the absence of choir, transepts, and chapels makes itself painfully felt. Of the domestic buildings of the once grand abbey what remains ? A miserable patched-up outer face of the gateway, with a portion of one of its flanking octagonal towers ; a fragment or two of wall ; a small vaulted room known as the "Potato Cellar," and lastly a subterranean passage, which is merely a large drain. Of course with regard to this passage there is the usual tradition, in this case Cheshunt Nunnery being given as the spot to which it directed its mole-like course. In the town itself, which not so long ago must have been a quaint and picturesque place, matters are quite as bad. Almost everything ornamental has been stripped from the houses, within

and without, the exceptions being a few beams of inferior type, two doorways of moderate antiquity, and some good brackets and a corner-post at a grocer's shop in the market-place. The carving of this corner-post was worth notice, and furnished me with the initial letter of this chapter. Beyond these, merely a few bits of old carved work are to be found in the town, and none in the original positions. One room is stated to be lined with a large number of finely carved and extremely decorative oak panels, the spoils of one of the old Abbey rooms, but dating from the post-Reformation period, when the place had become the property of the Denny family.

The existence of Waltham village or town began as far back as the days of Knut, whose standard-bearer, Tovi or Tovius, known as Tovi the Proud, had there a hunting-lodge, and subsequently founded a small convent, in the church of which two priests sang mass. In the days of Edward Confessor, we find that Waltham had reverted to the Crown, and was made the subject of a grant to Harold. Here Harold built a new church, or enlarged the existing one, establishing therein a dean and eleven secular canons, dedicating his foundation to the Holy Cross on May 3, 1060. This Holy Cross or Rood had been miraculously discovered in a vision to a carpenter at Montacute in Somersetshire upon the summit of the pointed hill there. The Rood itself was made of wood, and had carved upon it an image of Christ. The manner in which this Rood was conveyed to Waltham from far-away Somersetshire is not precisely stated, but it was by tradition miraculous. It also appears that the grant of the lands of Waltham which Athelston,

the son of Tovi, had through his wastefulness lost, was accompanied by a condition binding Harold to build a monastery where there "was a little convent, subject to canons and their rulers," which monastery was to be furnished with all "necessaries, relics, dresses, and ornaments," in memory of the King and his wife Eadith. (The much vexed question, whether Waltham was, or was not, the burial place of Harold, need not here be discussed; surely enough has already been written upon that dangerous topic.) After the Conquest, various benefactions increased the wealth of the House; Queen Maud gave a mill, and Queen Adeliza the tithes of Waltham to the Abbey, while from Stephen a confirmation of all privileges was obtained.

In the reign of Henry II. the foundation of Waltham was entirely dissolved owing, it is stated in the new charter then granted, to the debauchery of which the monks were guilty. The consent of the Pope was of course needful before this step could be taken, especially, too, as the King desired to substitute the Augustinian rule; but this consent was obtained, the house becoming thus one of Augustine canons in lieu of secular priests. It seems that at the same time the title of the Abbey was changed, and St. Lawrence was added to its dedication. Under Henry III. Waltham received the privilege of a weekly market and a fair. It was in this reign, when Simon was abbot, that the great dispute between the Abbey and the town took place. This originated in the townspeople killing four mares belonging to the Abbey, and driving away all the rest which were pastured on the marsh. Of this act the abbot took no notice, but bided his time, mentioning, however, a

date upon which he would discuss the matter. The day arrived, and the King's brother Richard, Duke of Cornwall, happened to be at the Priory, to the gate of which the townsfolk flocked for an answer. Abbot Simon, however, informed them that he was about to start on a journey, and that they must await his return in patience ; at which the townsfolk being wroth reviled him, went off to the pasture, and drove out the abbot's mares, drowning three and spoiling ten, the keepers also being severely handled. Still, however, the abbot gave no sign, but started upon his journey to Lincolnshire to visit the Justices Itinerant. On his return the townsfolk, somewhat alarmed, endeavoured to make peace, but instead of waiting to see how the abbot would receive these overtures, started with wives and children to London to the King, and shrewdly accused the abbot, some of their accusations receiving credit. Next came the turn of the abbot, who was possessed of episcopal power, and used it to excommunicate the men of Waltham. They, in their turn, entered upon a civil action against the abbot, and the suit was a *cause célèbre* in those days. As, however, may be expected, the decision went against the townsmen, who were "amerced in the sum of 20 marks " to the abbot. But like a wise and politic Churchman, he forgave the fine and removed the ban after due submission upon the part of the culprits. Simon seems to have had a liking for litigation, for he also appears as defendant in an important action laid by his neighbour, Peter, Duke of Savoy, the King's uncle and Lord of the neighbouring manor of Cheshunt. This dispute which concerned a river boundary, was one of very long continuance ; it was patched up more than once, only to break out again, and was absolutely a bone

of contention at the time of the Suppression. This was probably the longest legal case which can be found in the records of the country, having lasted, with but brief periods of intermission, from 1250 till 1540. Between the dates of Henry III. and Henry VIII., Waltham Abbey seems to have otherwise passed a placid existence, but it is curious to note that some years before the Suppression, Robert Fuller, the last abbot, gave over the valuable estate of Copt Hall to the King, apparently without receiving any compensation—a rather significant fact. Rumours, however, were at that time rife as to certain scandals in which the monks of Waltham and the inmates of the Nunnery of Cheshunt, then recently founded, were involved, and possibly this estate may have been given over as a species of hush money. Dr. Thomas Fuller's remarks on the subject are quaint, but the story told by Holman in his MSS. I shall notice hereafter, as it more properly belongs to Roydon. The Suppression came, and the glory of Waltham Abbey departed, the abbot receiving Copt Hall as a residence; the site of the abbey and many of its lands being bestowed upon Sir Anthony Denny for a term of thirty-one years. Speed states that the Denny family had long lived at Chesterton in Huntingdonshire. Sir Anthony was the second son of Sir Edmund Denny chief Baron of the Exchequer. He was born (probably at Cheshunt) January 16, 1500-1, and was educated at St. Paul's, under Lily, and afterwards at St. John's College, Cambridge. Called to Court, he was made King's Remembrancer, Groom of the Stole and Privy Councillor. The list of his share of Church lands is enormous, the thirty-one years' lease of Waltham being but one item. Denny was appointed guardian of Margaret, the daughter

and heiress of his co-robber, Thomas Lord Audley. He was knighted in 1544, and died in 1549, though some accounts give him two more years of life. Sir Anthony was one of the executors of the will of Henry VIII., receiving a legacy of £300. The whole of his time is stated by Roger Ascham to have been devoted to religion, learning, and affairs of State, but he must have been able to spare at least a small portion to carry on the intrigues needful in those days before grants of Church property were obtained. Denny's wife, Joan Champerton, was a courageous Protestant, and dared to send a sum of money, eight shillings, to Anne Askew while the latter was confined prisoner in the Tower.

The present parish church of Waltham, which is in reality only the nave of the old Abbey Church, is grand without being in the least degree elegant. The west end is disfigured by a comparatively modern tower, which was built by the parish in 1558, partly out of the proceeds of the sale of plate, vestments, and the new bells. Originally cruciform, the church has lost its central tower, north and south transepts and chancel, not to mention several chapels. One chapel, formerly used as a school but now again devoted to ecclesiastical purposes and known as the Lady Chapel, is to be found in an extraordinary position, viz., attached to the western side of the south transept.



There is, however, a certain warrant for this position, though, in no other case are circumstances quite similar. Beneath this chapel is a crypt, or charnel house, but this unfortunately is divided by brick party walls which form vaults, so that a complete view thereof is impossible. The vanished chapels of Waltham were St. Sepulchre's, founded, 1346; St. Thomas the Martyr's, 1188; the Abbot's Chapel, date unknown, but in existence in 1547; St. George's, totally unknown; and Lady Roe's Chapel, possibly a chantry. At the present day the Lady Chapel has been restored as far as possible—a difficult task, seeing that hardly a fragment of tracery remained to act as a guide, the labels of the windows had vanished, and much of the parapet was gone. There appears to be a divergence of opinion as to the date of building of this chapel. Matthew Paris gives it to Henry III; but in an investigation (*temp.* Edward VI.) lands were reported to have been given to a Lady Chapel long before that date; record absolutely remaining of donations in 1292, 1377, 1383. This however brings us no nearer to the knowledge of the date when this interesting building was erected; still it may, I think, be safely ascribed to the second decade of the fourteenth century. In the interior of this building the once fine mural painting representing the Resurrection upon the east wall is unfortunately rapidly vanishing; but for this there is no cure. One peculiarity of the Lady Chapel will be instantly noted—that its floor is five feet above the level of the church pavement.

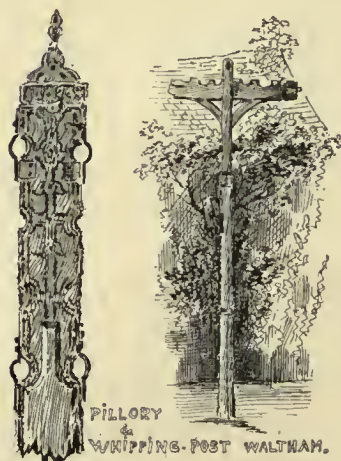
I have purposely left the consideration of the nave and aisles until the last, for as far as the masonry of its piers is concerned it is the grandest piece of ecclesiastical Norman work in the county,

and on this point there are not, I believe, two opinions. The massive circular columns, of which some are decorated with narrow incised spiral or zigzag bands, support the noble Norman arches, above which again the triforium and the reopened clerestory windows complete the architectural scheme. The east end is restored, the rose window being new and the glass also. It is not a success. But the most unfortunate decoration in the whole church is the ceiling of the nave. This has the appearance of a magnified and coloured border derived from Zadkiel's almanack or some kindred publication; doubtless it is not intended as a joke, yet it is impossible to take seriously this most unfortunate result of misapplied enthusiasm. With regard to the general date of the church it is impossible to speak with any exactitude. Many there are whose endeavours are always to pre-date buildings, as many to post-date them. Some have been found to say that the building is too late for Harold and too early for Henry II.; but surely even if Harold be not buried at Waltham, we may, I think, at least let him have the credit of building his Abbey Church. One other thing remains to notice in this building, and that is the inner west door, of which the carving is most elegant, though, unfortunately, the brutality of past days has much damaged the delicate diaper work which once adorned the wall.

It is very interesting to note that the celebrated musician, Thomas Tallis, was organist at Waltham Abbey, and the information which remains regarding the musicians here at the time of the Suppression is fairly complete. A certain John Boston officiated as organist in the Lady Chapel, using the "lytell payre

of Organs," which had been valued, it is stated, at *xxs.* about a century previously. John Boston received *xxd.* for mending the organs in 1546, his wages being *iiis.* and *iiis.* bonus as compensation at the Suppression. Tallis played on the "greate large payre of organes" in the north choir. On the Suppression he was pensioned, receiving *xxs.* for wages and *xxs.* bonus. A MS. music-book on vellum belonging to the old master, which had been the property of

the precentor, John Wylde, in 1400, is now in the British Museum (Lansdowne Collection, 763).



In a cupboard just within the porch are preserved the carved stocks and whipping-post which formerly stood beneath the Market House (dated 1598). The upper pair of clasps confined the hands of the culprit when being whipped—the lower pair being used as stocks.

Unlike the generality of stocks these were upright, *i.e.* the post was set vertically, and not supported upon two timbers. At Southwold, in Suffolk, there is a plain whipping-post, but the ordinary stocks are alongside of it. Upon the opposite side of the road, at the west end of the church, the lower board of the ancient pillory may still be seen; the upper board has vanished. This, apparently, was contrived for the use of two culprits at once. For many years this pillory was stored away amongst some lumber in the old Market House, but was luckily saved from destruction at the time (1852) when that building was destroyed. It may be

remarked that a pillory exists in the castle at Saffron Walden, and that another, in a most rickety condition, was a few years since under the town hall of Weymouth, Dorset.

Waltham is one of the places which still retains its pleasure fair, and I happened to visit it at that season. The irregular streets and open spaces were crowded with stalls, booths, and all the paraphernalia appertaining to such times; the place was noisy



GATEWAY, WALTHAM HOLY CROSS.

and full of life, but in no way to be compared to a similar sight which I once witnessed in quaint old Evesham, where amid the curious gables and overhanging stories of the bracketed timber houses, the scene was eminently picturesque, and, strange though it may appear, did not look out of keeping. A narrow passage leads immediately to the old abbey gate, which nowadays seems to be poked away in an obscure corner as if ashamed of its fallen estate. The shields held by angels, which are upon either side of

the spring of the arch, are so decayed that their blazon can no longer be determined; there is some reason to suppose, however, that they date from the time of Henry III., and possibly once bore the arms of that King. In front of this old gateway runs the "Corn Mill Stream," which is spanned by a modern three-arch brick bridge, the parapet of which, when I sketched it, had been burst through. Higher up this stream, at a distance of about two hundred yards, will be found another bridge, known as Stoney or Harold's Bridge. This is certainly of great antiquity, and consists of a single arch supported upon five broad chamfered ribs. Its span is eighteen feet or thereabouts, and one peculiarity should be noted—viz., that the masonry of the ribs is joined together with lead. It will be understood why I have omitted mention of the Eleanor's Cross at Waltham Cross, that structure standing in Hertfordshire; but I would remark that the name Waltham Holy Cross is derived from the Holy Rood of Montacute, and not from its proximity to the memorial of the good Queen. A few lines more upon Waltham before I proceed to Roydon. It is not a subject which can be in any way adequately treated in brief. I would fain have referred, had space permitted, to the interesting documents concerning the church (including the xvth century churchwardens' accounts), which give us a good idea of the various changes made in the church furniture during the early days after the Reformation. These accounts have already been printed, and will be found in Thomas Fuller's *History of Waltham Abbey* (ed. Nichols).

Roydon, a thinly-inhabited parish upon the River Stort, is remarkable for possessing one of the most picturesque ruins in

the whole county. It is called Nether Hall, and consists of a fragment of the gatehouse with the entire moat, which is partially walled, and at two of its opposite corners still has small octa-



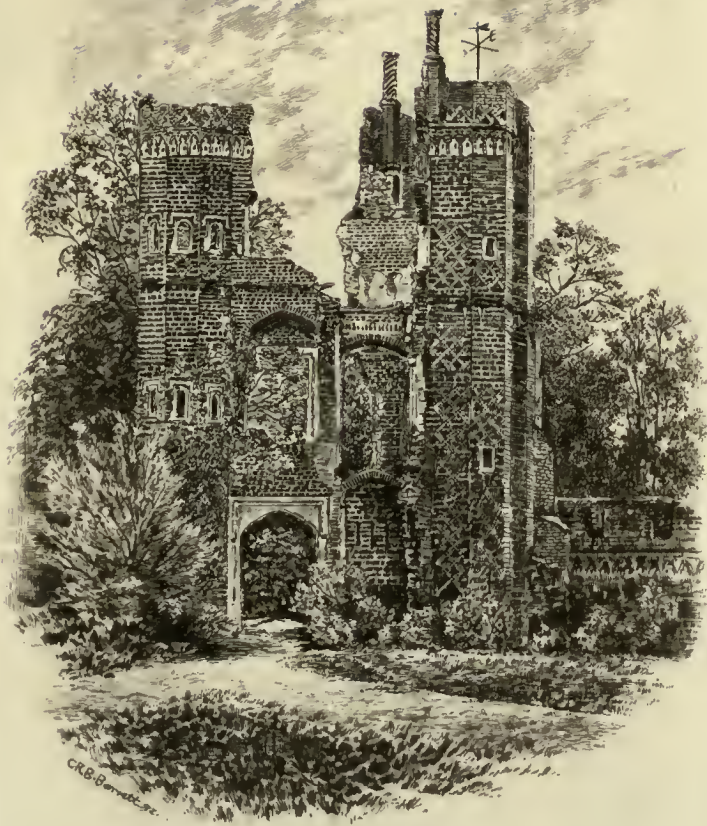
gonal towers. The brickwork of this fabric, when in its prime, must have been equal to any either at Leighs or at Faulkbourne, as the battered and time-worn relics testify. It is stated in

various books, some of which are of recent date, that the gateway is flanked by two semi-hexagonal towers, and that above the gate the arms of the Colt family, with two colts as supporters,



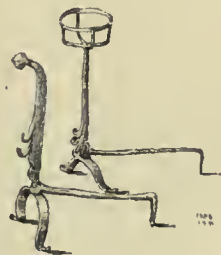
NETHER HALL.

are to be seen. It is also stated that the roof has fallen in, but that the room immediately above the gateway has a ceiling enriched with heraldic devices. Alas, there is but one semi-hexagonal tower now in front, nor indeed has there been more



Nether Hall, Boyden.

than one for many years. An engraving made from a sketch taken in 1790 shows the place as it was then, some twenty years after the manor house was demolished. No coat of arms now is to be found above the gateway, nor is there now any chamber of which the ceiling is adorned with heraldic devices. All this has vanished, save that in one corner, whence the ceiling of this room in former times sprang, a block of oak remains carved with a *rose-en-soleil* charged with something which appears to resemble either a ton or a billet. I have not hitherto been able to find any other instance of this peculiar badge, but I took the opportunity of making as careful a drawing of it as possible, and have used it as an initial lower down. It should be specially noted that the gatehouse of Nether Hall has the relics of a bartizan above the gate, and I have not, as far as I am aware, met with another example in the whole county. Originally each side of the gatehouse was furnished with two projecting half-towers in the rear, which were flush with the inner face; of these one now remains, and from near it one of my sketches was taken. In this tower is a circular stair which has been kept in repair, and which I naturally ascended. Half way up, among a heap of lumber, I came upon the two andirons, or andiron and hour-glass stand as I at first took it to be. (Possibly the cup was intended to hold a mug of sack or some such beverage.) Old French examples of similar though more ornate andirons are occasionally to be met with. Inside the moat all is tangle



and wilderness—tall trees are growing—here and there are traces of a now much neglected garden; the furthest corner has yet its little embrasured octagonal tower, a receptacle for rubbish, while the turret near the gatehouse adjoins a smithy which has been built on to the back of the ornamentally crenellated wall.



NETHER Hall was formerly the seat of the Colt family, who were established here in the reign of Edward IV. We find that Joan, the wife of Sir William Parre, and relict of Thomas Colt, died in the 13th year of Edward IV., and was seized (among other property) of Nether Hall, which she held of the Abbey of Waltham Holy Cross. The succession of the Colt family continued until the year 1635, when a George Colt succeeded to a fragment of the family estates, the greatest part having been squandered by his late father, Sir Henry. Of another Sir Henry Colt during the reign of Henry VIII. an amusing story is told by Holman. It appears that the knight had by means of his deer trackers obtained certain intelligence that a party of monks from Waltham had paid a surreptitious visit to Cheshunt Nunnery one evening. Sir Henry happened to be with the King, and hastened to excuse himself from further attendance, upon the plea that



he would in the morning divert his Majesty much. Colt spread his deer nets along the road, and laid his men in ambush. When the monks issued from the nunnery, the foresters upon a given signal raised a clamour—lanthorns were dropped, and the ecclesiastics fled in the darkness, only to find themselves netted. The next morning Colt carried them, nets and all, to the King, who is said to have remarked that he had met with sweeter but not fatter venison. It is to this story that Fuller alludes in his account of Waltham.

From Nether Hall to Roydon the field path leads over a high



hill, and before ascending I pause to look back across a cornfield at the tower just visible between the trees. From the top of this hill, it being clear weather, I could just discern the Alexandra Palace in the distance. Descending the hill I quickly pass through Roydon but do not stay to inspect the church. Near the railway I get a glimpse of the River Stört, winding through the meadows towards Roydon Mill, and I sketch it, if only to pass the time till I can get the train for Burnt Mill, from which I wish to visit Netteswell Church. My sole reason for going to Netteswell was to inspect the curious brick panel which is built into the

rubble wall of the little church. This panel is very remarkable, and displays a rose, two lions, a serpent (?) and a rabbit or hare. I have not met with any similar conjunction upon any other



PANEL OF CARVED BRICK NETTESWELL.

church or house in the county, and I venture to think that it is unique. The interior of Netteswell Church, which consists only of a tiny nave and chancel, contains nothing remarkable except a rather curious piscina, which is double and flat-headed with a

central column, a few fragments of ancient glass and one monumental brass.

From Netteswell I made my way to Latton Priory, of which there is not much to write nor, indeed, much to see. Still it is rather a surprise when, upon entering a cruciform barn, I find myself standing within the four fine tower arches of a church. The columns are massive, being in clusters of three with a beading, and the arches singularly bold. Such however is the case at Latton, and beyond these four arches and a few feet of wall projecting from their faces, in which traces of windows and a piscina are found, there is nothing more.



LATTON PRIORY.

One of these windows, an elegant little cinquefoil, will be found on the north wall of the nave. The piscina is in the east wall of the north transept, and in the south-west corner of the church there are the remains of an external staircase.

Latton Priory was formerly surrounded by a moat, and of this three sides still remain filled with water. It was never a wealthy house, being but meanly endowed; it was dedicated to St. John the Baptist under Augustinian rule some time prior to 1270. There were frequent vacancies among the canons, and as there were not enough to elect successors the right to appoint often lapsed to the Bishop of London. Holman states that in his time



most of the priory church was standing; would that it were still so, for the tower arches are really noble.

Leaving Latton I make my way towards Harlow, the end of my pilgrimage. The road thither is pleasant, and one passes two houses with most remarkable signs—viz., the “Bull and Horseshoes” and the “Sun and Whalebone.” Close by this last house is a green, called Potter Street, which is crossed by a beautiful long double avenue of elms, known as the Castle Trees. One would fain stroll down them in the shade, but Harlow is still some

distance off, and one may fairly be excused for feeling somewhat weary. However, at length I find myself entering the town, and pause to sketch a most picturesque old "malting" by the way-side. Here tile and thatch, plank, plaster, and brick are intermingled in curious confusion. Moss and lichen cling in patches to both walls and roofs, and flecked by the sun-



HARLOWBURY CHAPEL.

light shine in all brilliancy. To find any interesting traces of antiquity in Harlow it is needful first to pass right through the main portion of the town and turn to the left to Harlowbury, where in the garden of the now modernised manor house will be found a very fair Norman chapel. Harlowbury chapel is usually supposed to have been erected for the benefit of the abbots of Bury,

as the manor belonged to the abbey, and the house was one of the usual resting-places between Bury and London. At the present time it is used as a granary, and I was unfortunately unable to obtain the key. I should add that leave to explore was freely given, but by ill luck the keeper was not then there. My sketch shows the north door and a small window close to it. Leaving the old chapel I made my way through a couple of fields towards the restored old church of Harlow, passing a small block of almshouses on my way.

Harlow Church, though of no beauty architecturally, is nevertheless a church which well repays a visit, as it contains several good brasses, a curious collection of fragments of glass, and a fine parish chest. The brasses have been removed from the floor and placed upon the west wall of the north transept, some of them unfortunately so high aloft that it is very difficult to make them out. One dated 1615 is that of John Gladwin, another is to the memory of William Sumner, the last tenant of John Reeve, last abbot of Bury. This brass is not dated, but appears to belong to the end of the 16th century. Two brasses there are to members of the Bugge family, dated 1582 and 1636 respectively, and there is also a 14th century brass, name unknown, to a man and his wife. The fragments of glass are to be found in the windows of both transepts, and consist not only of shields but also of some medallion heads. One of these medallions is very remarkable, as it represents the head, life-size, of Charles I.; the remarkable points being that the King wears a night-cap, and that his crown is depicted as falling through

the air and quite detached from his head. Another medallion represents a queen, and may possibly be intended for Henrietta Maria. There are also fleurs-de-lys with the initials H. R., a lion holding a shield charged with the Stafford Knot, York and Lancaster roses, the portcullis and crown, the arms of England and modern France. Other coats are also displayed, notably that of Reve impaling Josselyn (*vide* title-page), the blazon of one of



the Bishops of London, Henry Compton, in which, of course, the arms of the diocese are duly impaled. One curious shield bears the following blazon :—Vert a fleur-de-lys or between two woolpacks in pale argent, enclosed by two flaunches of the third, each charged with a wolf passant azure ; these are the arms of Wolley of London. The east window of the north transept contains a large and very elaborately executed device of the Trinity, similar to but upon a far larger scale than the shield in Great Dunmow Church. In

the south transept in the east window I found two winged figures, one of which was holding a cross and the other playing upon a musical instrument, possibly a shawm. In the south wall of this transept are early English arched recesses, the evident relics of the original church. The parish chest which I have mentioned is peculiar from the fact that its ornamentations consist of figures cut out in fretwork, and cover both the rounded lid, the sides, and the ends.



At the south-east corner of the churchyard stands a modern lych-gate, to which another old almshouse adjoins. This almshouse was, as an inscription tells us, “given by IVLIAN, the wife of Alex. Stafford, Esq., for the habitation of two poor widows of this parish. A.D. 1630.” The tomb of Alexander Stafford and his wife is to be found in the south transept of the church. Alexander was a descendant of the Stafford family, or professed to be; hence probably the knot badge in the window. There are records of two chantries

at Harlow, one of which was founded at the altar of St. Petronilla the Virgin ; while the other, founded by the first rector of the parish, Hugh Stanton, was at the altar of St. Thomas. This chantry is stated by Wright to be entered in the London Registry, and to have been endowed for the benefit of the souls of the founder, his father and mother, John, formerly abbot of Bury, and others. About two hundred yards from the old almshouses I found an ancient house known as the Chantry, in all probability the successor of some dwelling connected with one or other of these foundations. It was picturesque with its projecting bays, pargetted front and steep gables ; and I sketched it. The devices upon the front are roses and fleurs-de-lys, but I cannot think that the place dates further back than the reign of Elizabeth, despite its name. Then, my journey at an end, I strolled gently through the straggling and disjointed streets which compose the scattered town of Harlow, noticing here and there evidences of almost vanished antiquity in its houses. So at length I concluded, with no little regret, my varied wanderings through the good old county of Essex.



EARLEY.



BERNERS.



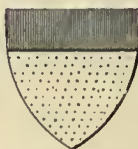
BRADBURY.



CORNHILL.



LANGLEY.



LOHLEY.



LANGERHAM.



WATERVILLE.

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¹ (I state in the text that "I have been unable to trace any staff of office in connection with the titles of the Prince." But in reading Birch's *Life of Prince Henry*, 1760, pp. 192—3, and *Appendix*, p. 527, I find that at the ceremony of the creation of the Prince of Wales, a rod of gold was carried by the Earl of Derby. This rod, with the crown, ring, and patent, was delivered to the Prince by the King's own hand. It was held by the Prince during the reading of his patent. When he was carried to his grave in an open chariot the gold rod was in his hand.)

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